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WEISS'S COMMENTARY
ON THE
NEW TESTAMENT

VOLUME FOUR



©
A COMMENTARY
ON THE
NEW TESTAMENT

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VOLUME IV
THESSALONIANS—REVELATION

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THESSALONIANS	1
II. THESSALONIANS	26
I. TIMOTHY	41
II. TIMOTHY	86
TITUS	117
PHILEMON	135
HEBREWS	142
JAMES	230
I. PETER	262
II. PETER	298
I. JOHN	320
II. JOHN	366
III. JOHN	371
JUDE	376
REVELATION	386



**THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS**

**I Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the
Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ :
Grace to you and peace.**

In Thessalonica, the most important city of Macedonia, situated on a gulf, and along the great Roman military road, was a busy commercial center Paul had a short time before established a Gentile Christian congregation. He had come to this place from Philippi in company with Silvanus, a member of the congregation in Jerusalem, and his associate Timothy. These accordingly join in the good wishes with which the Apostle begins his letter. He can give utterance to this wish because of the fact that God has made them the objects of His paternal affection, and because Jesus Christ, as the exalted Lord, has transmitted to them all the redemptive blessings of God. After Paul has made special mention of this, it is no longer necessary for him, in connection with the grace and

(2) We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of *you* in our prayers; (3) remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and ¹patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; (4) knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election, (5) ²how that our ³gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and

¹ Or, *steadfastness*. ² Or, *God and our Father*. ³ Or, *because our gospel, &c.*
⁴ Gr. *good tidings*; and so elsewhere; see marginal note on Mt. 4. 23.

the salvation which he wishes them, to add, as he does later, that these came from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 2 The Apostle begins with a thanksgiving for what God has so far wrought in the congregation. He and his companions of that time can never in their prayer make mention of all of the individual church members without also rendering thanks to God, because, before
- 3 the presence of God, who, as their Father, has at all times blessed their work, they constantly recall the prosperous condition of the congregation. In particular the Apostle thinks of the work of their faith, which shows itself at all times as a confidence in the grace and in the promise of God, as also of their love, which spares no effort in its service to the brethren, and of their endurance, with which, even in oppressions, they cling to the hope that their exalted Lord will bring to them the consummation of their redemption.
- 4 He feels impelled to give thanks for this, because he sees in all of this the signs of their election, for which reason he calls them the brethren beloved of God, and hence can certainly count upon it, that God will bring to a final consummation the work that has been begun
- 5 in them. The fact that they were elected certainly appeared already at that time, when he and his companions were preaching the gospel among them. For, in their case, this preaching consisted not merely in a human speaking, but it exerted a power over them,

I THESSALONIANS

[I, 6-8

in the Holy Spirit, and in much ¹assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for your sake. (6) And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit; (7) so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. (8) For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Mace-

¹ Or, *fulness*.

such as could only proceed from the Holy Spirit, and for this reason gave the missionaries such great confidence in their preaching. The Apostle can appeal to the experience of the readers themselves; for they know how gladly and effectively the messengers of the gospel preached among them. This, however, could only be the case if it was God's purpose, by this preaching, to call His elect to become living members of the Christian congregation, as which the Thessalonians still stand constantly before His eyes. But for the readers themselves, the fact that they were the elect showed itself in the circumstance that they, by virtue of the power that came from the proclamation of the gospel, had become imitators of the messengers of faith and of the Lord Himself in the joy that is worked by the Holy Ghost, with which they received the word of this Spirit amid much affection. This remembrance of the experiences that they passed through, at the time when the congregation was established, evidently resulted in strengthening them in their Christian life, which at that time had so joyfully begun. The same purpose is subserved by their remembrance of the fact that they then became 7 the models for all the believers in Macedonia, where congregations had already been established in Philippi and in Beroea, as well as in Achaia, where Paul was just gathering a church in Corinth. For from them the 8 word of the exalted Lord had been widely re-echoed since the news of their reception of this word was

donia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything. (9) For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, (10) and to wait for his Son from heaven, who he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

- spread from them, not only into those two provinces of ancient Greece, but also beyond them, as the Apostle could readily learn in his intercourse with strangers in Corinth. Everywhere the report had spread concerning the faith with which the Gentiles in Thessalonica had been converted to God, for as God's message of redemption this faith had been preached. For this reason it was not necessary for him or his companions to say
- 9 anything about the matter. But rather of itself the report of their work in Thessalonica went forth. It was told how they had preached there, and how, in consequence thereof, the Gentiles had turned from their idols and to God, in order henceforth to serve the living God, who alone is such in truth. It was reported that these preachers expected that the Son of God, concerning whom they had preached that He had risen from the dead and been exalted to heaven, would return
- 10 from heaven again. But, as the Son of God, they expected none other than Jesus, whom all Christians recognize as the Deliverer from the approaching punishment of wrath. From this it is clear in what form the messengers of faith preached the gospel when they entered upon their work in Thessalonica.

This remembrance of their experience at the time when the congregation was founded, has also the purpose of defending the Apostle and his companions against the slanders by which the Jews in Thessalonica tried to make the young Gentile Christian congregations refuse

II For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain : (2) but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the ¹gospel of God in much conflict. (3) For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile : (4) but even as we have been approved of God to be intrusted with the ¹gospel, so we speak ;

¹ Gr. *good tidings*. See ch. 1. 5.

to follow them. Commenting expressly on what Paul 1 had said of his and his companions' work in Thessalonica, he appeals to the fact that his readers themselves must know, namely, that they had not come with empty hands. It must have been said to the Gentile Christians, that Paul and his companions had had no reason for coming to them, and hence must have done so from some selfish purpose. For this reason the Apostle reminds 2 them of the fact, that they knew perfectly well that their messengers of the faith had just at that time been suffering persecutions in Philippi, where they had been outrageously maltreated. If he, notwithstanding, came with joyful heart to Thessalonica, the reason could only have been that their God had commanded them to go and preach to them also the gospel of redemption, even if this had to be done amid severe struggles, which grew out of the hostility of the Jews. These Jews had 3 tried to persuade the young Christians that these pretended messengers of the gospel, whom they certainly, since they were people of their own race, must have been quickest to understand, were deceivers, who sought to win them from improper motives, such as greed, or desire for honor, or by crooked methods. For this reason the Apostle declares that their preaching, with which they sought to gain the readers, did not proceed from vain motives, or from an impure mind, and was not based on tricky calculation. If God con- 4 sidered them worthy of being entrusted with the gos-

not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts. (5) For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; (6) nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have ¹claimed authority as apostles of Christ. (7) But we were ²gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: (8) even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the ²gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were

¹ Or, *been burdensome*, ver. 9; comp. 1 Cor. 9. 4. ff.

² Most of the ancient authorities read *babes*. Comp. 1 Cor. 14. 20.

pel, then their teaching cannot be based on vain notions; and if they speak, not as such who seek to please men, but to please God, the Searcher of hearts, then
 5 thereby all insincere purposes and means are out of the question. He can appeal to the personal experiences of the readers in support of his claim that their persuasion never was expressed in words of flattery, by which to gain the hearers through deception. But God was their witness, that their zeal for the truth was not a mere pretext, behind which they concealed an unworthy motive, such as that of greed. Nor were they
 6 prompted by the desire for honor, as is clear from the fact that they did not seek honor from men, neither from the Thessalonians, nor from any others in whose presence they perchance would boast of their success in Thessalonica. It is true that they, as representatives of Christ, could have come forward with the full
 7 weight of their office; but in all times they had showed gracious kindness, such as a superior who in his dealings goes down to an inferior, as all of them could testify among whom he had labored. Just as a nursing mother
 8 cherishes her own child in tender love at her breast, so they, with the longings of love which the mother evinces toward her suckling infant, had found their delight in communicating to their spiritual children nothing but the gospel of God. For as the mother, in

I THESSALONIANS

[II, 9-11]

become very dear to us. (9) For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail : working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the ¹gospel of God. (10) Ye are witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe : (11) as ye know how we *dealt with* each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging

¹ Gr. *good tidings*. See ch. 1, 5.

nursing her infant, gives up a part of her strength, often even to the point of exhaustion, so they in their struggle with their enemies had risked their lives in order to bring to them the food of the gospel. Such sacrifice shows that it was not greed that prompted them, but the love with which they were filled toward them. For this the Apostle could, however, appeal to an undeniable fact. For the readers certainly must 9 have remembered that Paul and his companions had practised their handicraft amid many troubles, and because they spend a good part of the day in the preaching of the gospel, they worked even during the night in order not to burden them with the demand that the congregation was to support them. For the congregation consisted of small business people and craftsmen, for whom this would have been a heavy burden.

The Apostle, in his defense of the mission work of the messengers of faith, proceeds to discuss their pastoral activity among those Thessalonians who had already become believers. He calls upon them and 10 God Himself to witness to the pious modesty with which he and his companions performed the work of their calling, because their conduct was in accordance with the will of God, and had been unblamable. For 11 the Thessalonians certainly knew from their own personal experience that they had with fatherly affection exhorted every one ; that they had by joyful encouragement raised up the hearts that were weighed down by

you, and testifying, (12) to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who ¹ calleth you into his own kingdom and glory.

(13) And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us ² the word of the message, *even the word* of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe. (14) For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even

¹ Some ancient authorities read *called*.

² Gr. *the word of hearing*. Gal. 3. 2, 5.

the weight of their demands; and had implored the
 12 believers to walk worthily of God. For as God had called them to His own peculiar kingdom and its glory through the activity of His messengers, these latter were compelled to do all in their power to enable them to walk in a manner conformable to His requirements. It was, then, in reality, not the word of man, but the
 13 word of God, which sought to lead them to this goal. And for this reason their teachers constantly rendered thanks to God because they had received this as such, although the truth had been transmitted to them through human teaching. For God Himself alone could have given to the preaching of His messengers the power which made the believers feel that it was of God. And when the Jews tried to convince them that they were merely being brought into hostility to their fellow-countrymen through the pretensions of tricky
 14 deceivers, it was only the power of the word of God operating in the believers which could enable them to suffer everything that these men inflicted upon them on account of their faith. The Apostle expressly emphasizes the fact, that thereby they become imitators of the congregations of God in Judea, who had become such by their confession of Jesus as the Christ. These had to suffer as much at the hands of the Jews as the Thessalonians had from their own countrymen. For at

I THESSALONIANS

[II, 15-17]

as they did of the Jews ; (15) who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men ; (16) forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved ; to fill up their sins always : but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

(17) But we, brethren, being bereaved of you for ¹a short season, in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more exceed-

¹Gr. *a season of an hour.*

this place Paul makes it clear that it was the unbelieving Jews who had sought, by slandering the messengers of God, to destroy their work in Thessalonica. He reminds them of the fact, that they had even put to death the exalted Lord Himself, whom the readers adored in Jesus, just as they had persecuted the messengers of God in the past and the messengers of Christ in the present. Of this, the Apostle's experience in Thessalonica and in Beroëa, was sufficient proof. Just as these men did not please God, so they stood in the attitude of hostility against all men by hindering the messengers of faith from preaching the gospel to the Gentiles which is to deliver them from destruction. It seems as though it were their purpose again to make full the measure of their sins, in order thus to call down upon themselves the wrath of God, although, indeed, the wrath of God has already come upon them in its worst shape, in the judgment of hardening, of which they are the objects.

What the Apostle says concerning the sending of Timothy serves also the purpose of his own defense. The young Gentile Christians in Thessalonica must have been persuaded that their deceivers had deserted them at an opportune moment, and in order not to become involved in the persecutions that they had brought down upon the congregation. But the Apostle goes on to relate how he and his companions had felt themselves as orphans through the separation from them,

ingly to see your face with great desire: (18) because we would fain have come unto you, I Paul once and again; and Satan hindered us. (19) For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his¹ coming? (20) For ye are our glory and our joy.

III Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone; (2) and sent Tim-

¹ Gr. *presence*. Comp. 2 Cor. 10. 10.

even though this was only temporary—only an outward, and not real separation. And because of these persecutions they had been all the more zealous in their desire to see them again face to face. For they
 18 had desired to return to them. The Apostle can say of himself, at least, that he had repeatedly resolved to do so, but Satan, probably through the machinations of the
 19 Jews, had prevented him from doing this. For he must ask on whose account he himself and his co-laborers had hoped to rejoice, and who were to them a crown of glorying, of whom they could boast. But remembering the fact that there were yet others of this kind, such, for example, as his beloved Philippians, he corrects himself, and only asks, if they, *too*, would not be among those whom he would finally present to the Lord Jesus, at His return, as a congregation that had been
 20 won by him. For in their case it certainly was an established fact that they were to him and to his companions a glory and a joy. Therefore, because their strong desire to return to Thessalonica had constantly been frustrated, they could finally no longer endure this absence, since the growing anxiety for them was becoming
 1 unbearable. They were in Athens, to which place they had fled from Berea (cf. Acts xvii. 14, 15), and here, in the city that was yet perfectly strange to them, Paul and Silvanus stood in great need of a Christian brother and co-laborer in the proclamation of the gospel con-
 2 cerning Christ, such as Timothy had been. But, not-

I THESSALONIANS

[III, 3-5

othy, our brother and¹ God's minister in the ² gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort *you* concerning your faith ; (3) that no man be moved by these afflictions ; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed. (4) For verily, when we were with you, we told you ³ beforehand that we are to suffer affliction ; even as it came to pass, and ye know. (5) For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might

¹ Some ancient authorities read *fellow-worker with God*.

² Gr. *good tidings* : see ch. 1. 5.

³ Or, *plainly*.

withstanding this, they resolved rather to remain there alone, in order to allay their longing to see their readers ; and they had sent Timothy back to Thessalonica in order to strengthen the congregation there, and to encourage the development of their faith. For their anxiety to see them again was not a mere matter of feeling, but was based on the desire by such a visit to 3 strengthen their faith, so that none would be induced to waver by their present distresses. This could only be the case if these distresses were something unexpected by them. But they certainly must know that the Christians are destined for just such distresses. This lies not only in the nature of the contrast in which they stand to the world around about them, but the messengers of faith, when they were with them, also foretold, that according to the coun- 4 sel of God they must suffer such oppression as had now occurred and, through bitter experience, become 5 known to them. But for the very reason that they are standing in this trial of sufferings, he, too, for whom it was the hardest thing to separate himself from his associates, so dear to him, could endure it no longer, but he decided to send Timothy on the mission of which he had spoken above. In this way he at least could obtain information of the state of their faith. Perchance those oppressions had been a temptation to them, such as the tempter brings about in order to

know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain. (6) But when Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to see us, even as we also to see you ; (7) for this cause, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our distress and affliction through your faith : (8) for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. (9) For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith

frustrate the arduous work of himself and his companions. For, if this were the case, then the mission of Timothy would not have sufficed ; in this case he and Silvanus would have been compelled to come personally, cost it what it may.

- 6 Timothy had returned from Thessalonica and had not only brought those good reports concerning the faith and the love of the congregation, on account of which Paul had at the opening of the letter rendered thanks to God, but had also reported, that notwithstanding all slanders the messengers of faith were remembered with gratitude, while the converts were no less anxious to see Paul and Silvanus again than these were to see
- 7 the Thessalonians. Through this both were relieved of all anxiety on their account, which was doubly necessary to them in their own condition of needs and oppression ; and this was now brought about through the
- 8 report of the faith of the Thessalonians. It seemed to the Apostle and to his companions that they had received a new life, which was possible only in the case that the Thessalonians clung to their Lord, who had
- 9 protected them against all wavering. The joy aroused on all sides by the news of them which Timothy brought, and that, too, before the face of God, to whom alone they can ascribe what this joy has effected, was so fervent that no thanksgiving was great enough for

we joy for your sakes before our God : (10) night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith.

(11) Now may ¹our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you : (12) and the Lord make you

¹ Or, *God Himself and our Father.*

them as a compensation for this joy. But as the best thanksgiving for all the spiritual gifts of God consists in constantly asking with still greater confidence for the increase of such gifts, their thanksgiving is accordingly constantly combined with an increasing fervency of prayer, which is, indeed, in the first place directed to seeing again their face once more, but also to gaining what their faith yet lacked of being complete. Naturally this faith itself needed not to be improved ; but the joyfulness of faith in all the temptations of life still needed constant development toward perfection, as is already seen by the reference to better times, in the beginning. With this the Apostle has returned to the thanksgiving at the opening of the letter, which, as is always the case, is connected with a prayer and a petition for the readers. But may He, who alone as their God, had at all times heard this prayer, and, as their Father, is willing to hear it, and may their exalted Lord Jesus, who is guiding the destinies of His own in accordance with the will of God, give first to him and his companions a direct way to them, by removing all hindrances to this way. He prays, further, that the Lord, who has preserved them in the faith, may give to the Thessalonians a continual increase and superabundance of riches in love toward each other, and toward all men, as he and his companions are rich, and superlatively rich, in their love for their spiritual children. Such growth of their spirit love is also to bring forth fruit for their own inner life, by making their

to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also *do* toward you ; (13) to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before ¹ our God and Father, at the ² coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.³

IV Finally then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk,—that ye abound more and more. (2) For ye know what ⁴ charge we gave you through

¹ Or, *God and our Father.* ² Gr. *presence.* Comp. 2. Cor. 10. 10.
³ Many ancient authorities add *Amen.* ⁴ Gr. *charges.*

13 hearts firm in the direction that has once been taken. But the goal is this, that they may finally stand blameless before God, who, since He is our Father, demands above all other things this affectionate disposition. This alone preserves the readers in the consecration to God that has been given them, by preventing them from being contaminated by sinful selfishness in the form of unclean lust and covetousness. The prayer and petition ends with a remembrance of the return of our Lord Jesus, who will in the end come again, in company with His saints, as the angels are here called, in order to indicate that before the judgment tribunal of His Father, He will recognize as His own only those who are as perfect in their holiness as the angels are.

- 1 Since the Lord, through His messengers, provides that the readers finally shall stand unblamable in their holiness, it only remains for these messengers to beg of them in a fraternal spirit, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, to admonish them to be on their guard against all contamination by the sins of the heathens. The Apostle is in a condition to refer them to the fact, that the Thessalonians have learned from them what the right method of Christian conduct is, through which they can become pleasing to God, as, on the whole, they already walk in such a manner. It is accordingly only necessary that they constantly in-

the Lord Jesus. (3) For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication ; (4) that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor, (5) not in the passion of lust, *even* as the Gentiles who know not God : (6) that no man ¹ transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter : because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we ² forewarned you and

¹ Or, *overreach*.

² Or, *told you plainly*.

crease in this. What special directions their teachers had given them with an appeal to the authority of the Lord Jesus, is well known to them. The matter that 3 is here involved is the will of God, through the fulfillment of which alone they can retain the consecration to God which has been given them, and in this way constantly more and more completely realize their sanctification. But for this it is first of all necessary, that they abstain from the cardinal vice of the heathens, namely, fornication. It is not demanded of them that 4 they shall abstain from sexual intercourse ; but they have learned that each one is to acquire his own vessel for this purpose in marriage, in which the wife is consecrated to the accomplishment of a divine order, and demands the honor due her for this purpose. In forni- 5 cation, on the other hand, the woman becomes the instrument of impure lusts, and is thus disgraced. Such disgrace is incurred by women, with the exception of certain cases among them, also among the Gentiles, of whom, because they do not know God, nothing better can be expected. In the same way it is sufficient to refer merely to the second cardinal vice of heathendom, namely, covetousness, by which their consecration to God must not be corrupted. Here it is a matter of 6 importance not to transgress the divinely-established demarcation line between the mine and thine, and thus in one's business transactions, not to defraud the brother. Their teachers, as they well know, have long

testified. (7) For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification, (8) Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you.

(9) But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; (10) for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren that are in all Macedonia. But we exhort you,

ago warned them of this, and have solemnly declared to them, that the Lord will call them to account for
7 such sins. For God has not called us into the Christian congregation on the basis of uncleanness, such as is manifested in the heathen sins of fornication and covetousness, but has done so in baptism, in that He has consecrated us to be His possession, since through His Spirit He puts to death all natural unclean tendencies. Whoever, then, disregards this, and submits again
8 to these unclean desires, disregards not a man who has bidden him abstain from such things, but disregards God Himself. Nor can he excuse himself on the ground that he has not the strength to overcome these desires, because God constantly imparts to us His Holy Spirit, who makes this sanctification possible for us.

9 But with reference to the love to our brethren, which the Apostle above had declared to be the root of all sanctification, he, as it were, excuses himself, that he and his companions had not first directed their admonitions to this matter. They felt it was not necessary to write to them on this subject, because the readers themselves had been taught by God, through His Spirit, to love one another. For that God in this respect is their teacher, can be seen by the fact, that they not only
10 know this, but also do it. The intercourse of this city as a commercial center with all parts of the province furnished them ample opportunity to show this natural love for all the brethren throughout Macedonia. For

brethren, that ye abound more and more ; (11) and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you ; (12) that ye may walk becomingly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing.

¹ Gr. *be ambitious*. See Rom. 15. 20 marg.

this reason the admonition of the Apostle can only here be, that they should in this respect also grow more and more, for which end the assistance of Christ, which in the preceding he has wished them, would never fail them. But the especial condition of the congregation prompts the Apostle to add, that they should esteem it 11 their especial glory that, on their part such exercise in love is not lacking. The expectation of the speedy return of the Lord, had called forth agitated discussion of the questions pertaining to the last things. On this account many neglected their daily occupations, which they thought would no longer benefit them if this day was to bring the end of the world. To this the Apostle refers, when he admonishes them to do their work in quietness and to engage in the business for which they have been called, as he had even admonished the Christians not to be hindered through their Christian calling in the fulfilment of their earthly calling, but to be urged on by the former. As a reason for this he ex- 12 pressly adds that in their dealings with the non-Christians they are to distinguish themselves by an orderly life in their several callings. They are not to appear as pious idlers, who in consequence of a fanatical enthusiasm are even applying for support to their unbelieving neighbors. This explains why, just in this connection, he enters upon the questions connected with the return of Christ, which excited the minds of the Thessalonians to such a remarkable extent.

As all the Christians had expected to be eyewitnesses of the return of the Lord in their lifetime, the first

(13) But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep¹ in Jesus will God bring with him, (15) For this we say unto

¹ Gr. *through*. Or, *will God through Jesus*.

- cases of death in the young congregation had caused great excitement. Evidently Paul, who shared these expectations, had not yet had an opportunity to speak of the fate of those who might die before this return, or the readers had not fully understood what he may at times have said on this subject, because we know that for Greeks nothing was harder to understand than
- 13 the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. For this reason he states that he and his companions are unwilling to keep them in ignorance concerning those who are already asleep in the graves, so that they would not mourn over them, as the others of their people do. In the case of the heathens this could readily be understood, since they did not share the Christian hope for the kingdom of glory, which was to come with the return of Christ. But now the readers had been disturbed by the question whether those who had in the meanwhile died could take part in this blessedness and glory, and for this reason they mourned over these. But the Apostle comforts them by stating, that by the
- 14 assured certainty of the resurrection of Jesus after His death, it has been settled, that God would through the exalted Lord, who in the future, too, continues to be their Mediator for all time, take with Him those who, like Jesus, had died, to that place to which He has taken Jesus in His resurrection and exaltation, namely, to heavenly glory. But this he bases upon the word of the Lord that had been transmitted to him. For since
- 15 Jesus in Matt. xxiv. 31 expressly states, that, at His return, He will send His angels in order to gather

you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the ¹coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; (17) then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the

¹ Gr. *presence*.

His chosen ones about Him, it is to be concluded from this, that those who then are yet alive and remain to the return of the Lord, among whom the Apostle expressly includes himself, are in no way to have an advantage over those Christians who have in the meanwhile died, and who certainly also belong to the elect. Connecting this with what the Lord says of the angels, the Apostle describes how the Lord Himself will descend 16 from heaven, when the word of command which authorizes Him to return proceeds from God, as the voice of the archangel calls the angels around him, in whose company He shall come, and when the trumpet of God, after the analogy of Ex. xix. 16, shall give the signal for the beginning of the consummation. Then those who have died in the Lord, will be *first* recalled to life, so that there can be no thought of any advantage of the living over the dead. Not if and how those who are dead are, together with those still alive, to attain to glory, can be the question, but rather if the latter shall attain it with the former. For the resurrection of the believers, exactly as this was the case with Christ, is a resurrection to heavenly life. But those who are left 17 are still living in this terrestrial body, in which they surely cannot partake of the heavenly life. Only later has the Apostle shown, that these, too, by a wonderful transformation of their bodies, are put on an equality with the transformed bodies of those who have risen from the dead. Here he goes no farther than to state,

Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore ¹ comfort one another with these words.

V But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. (2) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (3) When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a

¹ Or, *exhort.* ch. 5. 11.

that those who are alive will, together with those who are arisen, be at the same time carried away in the clouds, in order to meet the Lord, who comes to meet them in the clouds of the heavens. For He does not come to establish an earthly kingdom ; but, according to His word, to gather the elect about Him and to take them home to His heavenly kingdom. In the air, i. e. in the superterrestrial regions, only he can be accepted, who, being freed from his terrestrial body, shares with the Risen Lord a transformed body. In this way we will then be united with our exalted Lord forever. In conclusion the Apostle asks his readers to comfort one another with these words.

- The time of the return of Christ was also a leading subject of speculation in Thessalonica, and distracted the young Christians away from their regular work. They
- 1 asked themselves whether they could not determine the times or the periods of time, so that the approach of this return could be decided. But the Apostle declares that it was not necessary that anything should be
 - 2 written to them about this matter. For they knew from the well-known parable in Matt. xxiv. 43, that the day in which God, in conjunction with the return of Christ, will bring about the final consummation, is as uncertain as the hour in which the thief breaks into a
 - 3 house. They merely know, according to Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, that this day will certainly bring destruction upon those who are living in indifferent carelessness.

woman with child ; and they shall in no wise escape. (4) But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you ¹as a thief : (5) for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day : we are not of the night, nor of darkness ; (6) so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. (7) For they that sleep sleep in the night ; and they

¹Some ancient authorities read *as thieves*.

When they think that they can live in undisturbed peace and security protected against every harm, then all at once, and unexpectedly, the destructive judgment of God that comes with the return of Christ will appear, as the pangs come upon a woman about to give birth to a child. But they, his Christian brethren, are not in ignorance of this, that the day of the Lord comes unexpectedly and they should thereby not be surprised by its coming, as a man is surprised by the coming of a thief in the darkness of night. For they are indeed the children of the light, i. e. are enlightened and know the manner in which the day of the Lord comes, and they are thereby adherents of the bright day, as the time of light, in which men can see how to walk, in order not to be surprised by the coming of Christ. The Apostle expressly includes himself among them saying, that "We" do not belong to the night and its darkness. For this reason it is necessary, not to do as others do, i. e. the people of the night, who are ignorant of the impending catastrophe and who sleep, but we are to remain awake. With the clear consciousness of the approach of the return and with the spiritual alertness which is always prepared for the same, such sobriety is to be found enjoined as is free from all unhealthy excitement, and keeps the eyes open and the strength in full vigor. The Apostle again points to the Gentiles, who, because they are surrounded by darkness, as though it were night, sleep or become drunken in their nightly carousals. For through the deadening

that are drunken are drunken in the night. (8) But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. (9) For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (10) who died for us, that, whether we ¹wake or sleep, we should live together with him. (11) Wherefore ²exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.

¹ Or, *watch*.

² Or, *comfort* ch. 4. 18.

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- and stupefying influence of the sensual pleasures, the sobriety that is demanded of the Christian may be lost.
- 8 Therefore it is necessary for them, around whom all is day, in this spirit, too, to be sober. And just as men, when it is day, put on their clothing, thus they, because they with open eyes see the dangers that threaten their Christian lives, are to put on the armor of the Christian, in order to be constantly ready for the struggle against these dangers. This armor, however, consists in the
- 9 breastplate of faith and of love and in the hope of the approaching deliverance, which protects the head as a helmet. That we can at all times put on this hope, is clear from the fact, that God has not destined us to be those upon whom His wrath shall be poured out on the great day of judgment, but to be recipients on this day, through our Lord Jesus Christ, of that redemption which is already made certain to us in this hope.
- 10 For this purpose Christ has died for our sakes, in order that, whether we, at His coming, are yet alive or are already asleep in death, shall together with Him be made partakers of eternal life. Once again the Apostle
- 11 calls upon his readers to comfort and to admonish one another also in this matter, and thus for each one to contribute to the edification, i. e. the spiritual development of the other. As they do this now already, he has through his words of comfort in admonition given them new material for this purpose.

(12) But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; (13) and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. (14) And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. (15) See that none render unto any one evil for evil ; but al-

The final exhortation begins with a brotherly petition for a rightful recognition of their church officials and their importance for the congregation. There was probably yet wanting to the congregation the willingness to submit to the direction of these men. From this and from the manner in which the Apostle describes these men, it is clear that they did not as yet possess any officially fixed authority, but through their arduous labors in the service of the congregation had won for themselves the right, at the command of the Lord, to manage the affairs of the congregation and to exhort the members in a pastoral capacity. For this reason the Apostle can ask of the readers to respect these in love as such as they have proved themselves through their services. But apart from their activity he and his companion must admonish the congregation to keep peace one with the other, as this peace was doubtless often endangered by the lively discussions concerning the last things. As Paul had stated above, that each one was to help the other in his spiritual development, so now he directs them to admonish all those who had in their spiritual excitement given up their regular calling in life, to comfort those who had lost courage on account of their oppressed condition, and to look after those who are weak in the faith, so that they may not waver. In demanding enduring patience in all things, he thinks of those also who do them harm, especially then of the non-Christians. This leads him to warn

ways follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all. (16) Rejoice always; (17) pray without ceasing; (18) in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward. (19) Quench not the Spirit; (20) despise not prophesyings; (21) ¹ prove all things; hold fast that which is good; (22) abstain from every form of evil.

(23) And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire,

¹ Many ancient authorities insert *but*.

them against all vengeance, instead of which they are only to seek after that which is for the good of the other, 16 and that as much toward each other as toward the non-18 Christians. In the condition of suffering, too, which this brings with it, they are at all times to maintain the joy which is the characteristic spirit of the Christians, by placing their matters before God, at all times and in continuous prayers, and in everything which He sends to thank Him, because at all times there is a blessing in it. For this is the will of God, as it is given to them in Christ Jesus, in whom they have at all times reasons for joy, confidence of prayer and thanksgiving. If in 19 the excitement which had filled them in reference to 21 questions of the future, the Spirit at times found expression through them in ecstatic words, they are nevertheless not to quench this fire, and are not to despise prophetic speaking, because, perchance, the one or the other turns out not to have been inspired by the Spirit. 22 But naturally they are to prove all things, and to retain only the good; and hence to withdraw from all kinds of evil and accordingly, too, from this unhealthy excitement and enthusiastic activity. Finally, the blessing 23 of the Apostle commends them to God, who alone is able to preserve the peace of our soul, which is so often disturbed by the imperfect character of our sanctification, by developing character in every direction. Only He can preserve their new spiritual life, as also their

without blame at the ¹ coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (24)
Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.

(25) Brethren, pray for us.²

(26) Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss. (27) I adjure
you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the ³ brethren.

(28) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

¹ Gr. *presence*.

² Some ancient authorities add *also*.

³ Many ancient authorities insert *holy*.

natural soul life and their bodily life in every direction
against pollution through sin, so that they may finally
be found unblamable at the return of Christ. He 24
commends them to Him, who in calling them gave
them the assurance, that He would bring them to the
consummation of their redemption, because He too will
carry out that which He wills and which is necessary
for this purpose.

In the conclusion of his letter the Apostle commends 25
himself and his companions to their prayer. He urges 26
the officials, to whom this letter was delivered, in their
name to greet all the Christian brethren and to seal
this greeting with the holy kiss as a sign of the Chris-
tian communion of love. The fact that he solemnly 27
adjures them to have this epistle read in the public as-
sembly of the congregation shows, that by this letter he
began his dealings with the congregations he had founded
and desired first to introduce this custom. But he es-
pecially insists that the letter is intended for all, also
for those who, perchance, had been led away from him by
the slanders that had been spread about him (cf. chapter
ii.), and also for those who, perchance, were guilty of the
sins reprovèd in chapter iv. He expressly styles them
the saints, because those too, who were by no means all
that they ought to have been, nevertheless share in the
consecration to God which belongs to the congregation.
He closes with the usual salutation, commending them 28
to the blessed communion of the grace of Christ.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ; (2) Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(3) We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one an-

It must not have been long after the first letter to the Thessalonians that Paul received further news from them, according to which the persecution of the congregation had increased and with these also the fanatical and excited expectation of an impending return of Christ, which should put an end to their sufferings. He felt compelled by these reports to write a second Epistle, the beginning of which reads exactly as does
1 that of the first, only that the salutation is enlarged so
2 as to correspond with that found in later Epistles (cf. Rom. 17).

Here, too, Silvanus and Timothy join in with the
8 thanksgiving of the Apostle for that which God has wrought in the congregation. It seems, indeed, that in their great sufferings the readers had little occasion to be thankful. All the more deliberately does the Apostle emphasize the fact, that he and his associates are at all times compelled to render thanks, because such thanksgiving alone is worthy of their joy in the exceptionally great growth of the faith of the congregation and of the increase of their love, in which none of them

II THESSALONIANS

[I, 4-7

other aboundeth ; (4) so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your 'patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure ; (5) *which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God ; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer : (6) if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, (7) and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of

¹ Or, *steadfastness*.

is behind the others. Even he and his companion, who 4
were accustomed to place before themselves a higher
measure of Christian perseverance than they expect in
others, boast of them before the congregations of God on
account of their endurance in the faith, which had been
severely put to the test in their persecution and in the 5
afflictions which they had to endure. But this, as the
Apostle makes prominent for the purpose of strengthening
them, is a sign of the just judgment of God. For
the more the Gentiles by their persecutions of the be-
lievers reveal their hostility to God, and the believers,
in patiently enduring these, prove themselves true, so
much the nearer must the judgment of God be. If
their present condition becomes for them an indication
of this fact, then their faith must be strengthened, in
order that in the end they may be regarded as worthy
of the completed kingdom of God, for the attainment
of which their passage through these trials in suffer-
ings is necessary. For, as they well know, it is only
just before God, that each one, according to the rule of 6
compensation, should receive exactly according to his
deeds ; and accordingly those who afflict them will re-
ceive affliction, and those who suffer afflictions will
receive deliverance from these, such as he and his com- 7
panions also expect. Of course, this can take place
only when Jesus is finally revealed as the exalted Lord,
by coming from heaven, in company with the angels,

of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, (8) rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the ¹ gospel of our Lord Jesus : (9) Who shall suffer punishment, *even* eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, (10) when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you

¹ Gr. *good tidings* : and so elsewhere. See marginal note on Mt. 4. 23.

who are to carry out His commands. To this Paul had already drawn attention in his first Epistle, when he spoke of the glory which awaits both the living and the dead. Now he refers the readers to the reverse of this picture, namely, to the judgment, which then will
 8 come over their enemies. In the strong terms of the Old Testament he describes how the Lord will then come in a flame of fire, the symbol of destroying wrath, which will bring just retribution upon the heathens, who have not known God, although He had revealed Himself to them since the creation; and all the more upon those, to whom the gospel of our Lord Jesus
 9 Christ had been preached, and who do not obey the demand of God to accept the message of joy. They will be compelled to pay the penalty for this in the eternal destruction which comes upon them from the face of
 10 the Lord, who, will carry out His judgment upon them according to the glory of His exalted power. But this can take place only when He shall have come, in order that this glory of His may be revealed in the midst of the angels who accompany Him on His return, and who are here called His saints. Then those, too, will look with amazement at Him, who once had been convinced of the testimony of the Apostle and his associates concerning Him which was given to the Gentiles, and who now see this so wonderfully confirmed in that great day of His return. But as the Apostle in the opening of his letters adds to the thanksgiving a

II THESSALONIANS

[II, 1

was believed) in that day. (11) To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfil every ¹ desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power ; (12) that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

II Now we beseech you, brethren, ² touching the ³ coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto

¹ Gr. good pleasure of goodness. Comp. Rom. 10. 1.

² Gr. in behalf of.

³ Gr. presence.

prayer for his readers, so here he recalls the fact, that 11
his prayer for them, which at all times accompanies his
thanks, has this as its final purpose. For this prayer
can only ask that God, who has given to His messengers
such success in the congregation, may also regard the
readers as worthy of this calling. And for this purpose
it is necessary that He powerfully bring to full de-
velopment all the pleasure in righteousness and all evi-
dences of their faith, which He has so far worked in
them. For only in this way can the name with which
we confess Jesus as our Lord, be glorified in them, 12
when they confess this name steadfastly, amid all per-
secutions. And only in this way can they too be glori-
fied in this name, as God has, according to His grace,
called them unto glory and has transmitted this His
grace to them through the agency of our Lord Jesus
Christ.

In the deplorable sufferings of the Thessalonians, the 1
excitement of their minds had reached a climax, so that
they were daily expecting the advent of the great day
of the Lord. For this reason the Apostle is compelled
to remind them of the conditions that must yet be ful-
filled before the return of Christ. He turns to them with
a fraternal petition, at the same time addressing them in
the name of his associates. The matter under discussion
is the expected return of the Lord Jesus Christ and of
their being at once gathered around Him, of which Paul,

him : (2) to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand ; (3) let no man beguile you in any wise : for *it will not be*, except the falling away come first, and the man of ¹sin be

¹ Many ancient authorities read *lawlessness*.

- on the basis of Matt. xxiv. 31, had spoken in his first letter, and which return should find them in the proper
 2 state of mind. But for this it is necessary that they should not permit themselves to be unduly excited, which would make them incapable of all reasonable thought and would rob them of all sobriety or even burden them with severe anxieties. This could be caused only by the spirit that inspires them and which certainly was not a spirit of God, either by a word which claimed to be prophetic or by a letter which claimed to be written by their teacher or which the latter had caused to be written. Such things must have happened, as would have aroused in them the notion that the day of the Lord was coming in the immediate future.
 3 And now comes the petition of the Apostle, that they would not permit themselves to be deceived in this or in any other way. For it is necessary that the great defection shall first come, of which they know from the Apostle's preaching, from which defection alone the last and greatest development of sins results. At that time, when the young Christian church was not threatened by any falling away, and the world as such, which on the whole was heathen, could not fall away from God because it did not even know Him, he can have in mind only a defection of the Jews, to whose threatening hostility to Christianity Paul had already drawn attention in the first Epistle. When this hostility shall have attained its utmost development, it could end in nothing but in complete defection from the living God, be-

II THESSALONIANS

[II, 4-6

revealed, the son of perdition, (4) he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or ¹ that is worshipped ; so that he sitteth in the ² temple of God, setting himself forth as God. (5) Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things ? (6) And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own

¹ Gr. *an object of worship*. Acts 17. 23.

² Or, *sanctuary*.

cause this nation, which had been chosen by Him for redemption, definitely had rejected the Messiah that God sent them. Only from this falling away could this terrible phenomenon come forth in which the acme of all sin becomes revealed,—that man of sin, in whom sin, as it were, was embodied, the Antichrist, whom the Apostle calls the Son of Perdition, because he is doomed to be eternally destroyed. The Apostle describes this person more fully as the antagonist of all that is divine, who in a blasphemous way elevates himself over all that is 4 among Christians or among Gentiles, or otherwise is called an object of divine adoration. He proves this by the fact, that he sits down in the temple of God in Jerusalem, and arrogates to himself the claim of being a divine being. He thereby claims to be that one, in whom, according to Mal. iii. 1, God Himself comes to His temple ; and as it was once charged against Jesus that He was blaspheming God by calling Himself the Messiah, thus this man of sin actually does this, when in him this false Messiahship, concerning which Jesus had predicted (Matt. xxiv. 24) becomes a reality. The Apostle asks, if they do not remember that when he 5 was with them he had spoken of this appearance of the Antichrist, which must precede the return of Christ. For Jesus Himself had said that Israel in its elders had already fulfilled the measure of its sins, and that God would then bring about the judgment, (Matt. xxiii. 32, 35). And the readers knew full well, what it was 6

season. (7) For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: ¹only *there* is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall be revealed the

¹ Or, *only until he that now restraineth be taken, &c.*

7 that according to God's counsel still checked this development of sin from reaching such extremes, so that the Antichrist could only be revealed in the time appointed for this purpose by God. For again and again the Roman political and judicial powers had protected the Apostle against the fanatical hostility which the Jews cherished toward Christianity. It is indeed true that this hostility was still veiled under the garb of zeal for God and for His law, against which the Apostle, according to their ideas, was transgressing by teaching the doctrine of grace. But in secret there was found in Israel that rupture with every law in principle, which showed itself on all occasions when they refused to fulfil the will of God as revealed by His Messiah. As the divinely established government was yet in the way of this lawless wickedness, it was necessary for the latter to hide itself under a religious garb; but this was the case only for the present, until this legal government and power, which was represented in the person of the Roman emperor, should have overthrown and put out of the way. But this can take place only when the Antichrist appears, concerning whom the Apostle now intends to speak directly.

The final purpose of Messianic hopes, as these were entertained by the unbelieving Jews, was at all times the deliverance from the yoke of Roman supremacy.

8 Only him who would overthrow this power were they willing to recognize as the Messiah; and if this had been successfully accomplished, then this man would actually have revealed himself as the one who had emancipated himself from all the divine order which

II THESSALONIANS

[II, 9-10

lawless one, whom the Lord ¹ Jesus shall ² slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his ³ coming ; (9) *even he*, whose ⁴ coming is according to the working of Satan with all ⁵ power and signs and lying wonders, (10) and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that ⁶ perish ;

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *Jesus*.

² Some ancient authorities read *consume*.

³ Gr. *presence*.

⁴ Gr. *power and signs and wonders of falsehood*.

⁵ Or, *are perishing*.

He maintains upon earth through human government. Then only one thing was left for him to do, to direct his wickedness against the True Messiah and His confessors, in order to destroy them. But before the Apostle describes this further, he states, in order not to alarm his readers by these visions of the future, that when this acme of wickedness shall have arrived, the return of Christ must take place. Through the mere breath of His mouth, i. e. by the mere word of command, He will hurl aside His adversary ; and through the mere fact of His appearance will utterly destroy Him. Paul calls this appearance by the term with which the Christians were accustomed to designate the ⁹ return of Christ, as His arrival, or presence, in order by using the same term in reference to the Antichrist, to describe the appearance of the latter as an effort to imitate the former. This appearance shall take place, necessarily in accordance with the workings of Satan, who brings forth this last opponent of God and of Christ, as it were, to dispute the supremacy with these. Satan will equip him with all kinds of powerful deeds, with signs and wonders, as, e. g., with the power to overthrow the civil government, in order in this way to demonstrate that he is the Messiah, and in this way to serve the falsehood which pretends that it is he. Satan ¹⁰ has equipped him with all kinds of deception, by which injustice seeks to gain power upon earth ; but, as the Apostle adds, for the purpose of comforting his readers, this is intended, and is effective only for those who,

because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: (12) that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

(18) But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you¹ from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the

¹ Many ancient authorities read as *firstfruits*.

even as it is, are destined to destruction, so that the believers have no reason to fear on this account. But the rest are not given up to destruction on account of their sins, but because they did not cherish love for the truth, which God intended to work in them through the gospel, and which He offered them as a gift of grace for the purpose of delivering them from destruction.

- 11 For this reason alone God sends them the strong delusion which Satan produces through this false Messiah, in order that they, who would not cherish love for the truth, must now believe that which is a lie. This is the judgment of God, who punishes sin by a constant
- 12 deeper sinking into sin, upon those who have not believed the truth, because they would not depart from unrighteousness, to which their hearts adhered with pleasure. This judgment the Antichrist can and will carry out, so that when sin has attained its highest development, the final judgment can come together with the return of Christ. But the readers fortunately do not belong to those who in him are condemned to
- 13 destruction. The Apostle again brings prominently forward the fact that he and his associates feel themselves at all times under obligations to thank God on their account, he addressing them as his beloved brethren, who accordingly have no reasons for fearing this judgment. For God has elected them for Himself, in order that, as in Israel formerly every first-born was

II THESSALONIANS

[II, 14-16]

Spirit and ¹belief of the truth: (14) whereunto he called you through our ²gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (15) So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours.

(16) Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good

¹ Or, *faith*.

² Gr. *good tidings*: see ch. 1. 8.

consecrated to be His property, they had become the first-fruits to them from the Gentile world. As such they must be saved from destruction, because God had in baptism sanctified them through His Spirit, after working in them faith in the truth. On the basis of this election on His part, He has also called them into 14 the congregation by working faith in them through the preaching of His messengers, so that they finally shall attain to the possession of the heavenly glory, which our Lord Jesus Christ already possesses.

The Apostle had started from the admonition that the readers should not permit themselves to be disturbed and to be made to waver in their expectations 15 of the future. Now he closes with the admonition, that they are to stand steadfast in what has been delivered to them in this regard, partly through oral teaching of the messengers of faith and partly by letters. As a matter of course, our Lord Jesus Christ can 16 best carry out this purpose, as God, who in Him has come to be our Father, works through Him. For this reason it is only by God through whom we are assured by Christ of the fact that He has loved us and has given us an abiding comfort. Of this we can be deprived by no sufferings or persecutions, because nothing can separate us from His love. But this love has at the same time given us a good hope, which is not to be put to shame, because His love must in the end lead us to that blessed goal for which He has destined us. To

hope through grace, (17) comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

III Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also *it is* with you : (2) and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men ; for all have not faith. (3) But the Lord is faithful, who

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- 17 this fatherly love of God the Apostle appeals with his wish and his prayer, that He would comfort their hearts also with that comfort which is prepared for all and would confirm them by the hope which he has granted us, in every good work and word. For he who has such hope will surely continue in doing good, and
- 1 with good words assist others to attain this goal. For this reason the Apostle demands nothing more of them than their brotherly prayers for him and for his associates. Not indeed for himself personally, but for the cause in the service of which he lives. They are to pray that the word of God, which they serve, may spread as rapidly as possible and be recognized and accepted as such. For thereby it is everywhere glorified,
- 2 as it has been glorified among them. But for this it is also necessary, that the messengers of faith be delivered from the hands of men, who at all stages oppose them and try to hinder their work, and even threaten their lives, because these are wicked men. He of course is thinking of the unbelieving Jews, concerning whom he has said exactly the same things in his first letter. And the fact that the Apostle does not rather ask the Thessalonians to pray for their repentance, is based upon the fact, that faith is not everybody's affair. Faith can be worked only in those whom God has elected in grace. But to these the readers belong, in whom He has worked this faith, and to whom He has thus given
- 3 the assurance that He could bring them to the goal of

II THESSALONIANS

[III, 4-6

shall establish you, and guard you from ¹the evil *one*. (4) And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command. (5) And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the ²patience of Christ.

(6) Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition

¹ Or, *evil*.

² Or, *steadfastness*.

His salvation. Paul refers them to His faithfulness to the end that the Lord may make them steadfast and will protect them against evil, so that they will not become such evil persons. In this same Lord the Apostle, together with his companions, feels firmly confident that his readers will follow these directions of theirs. Here for the first time it appears, that this final exhortation was intended to be only an introduction to certain especial directions, which he yet intends to give them in reference to those concerning whom the first Epistle had indicated that they were neglecting their regular occupations on account of their fanatical hopes of the future. But before he gives this direction, the Apostle expresses the wish that the Lord would guide their hearts to the love of God and to the patience of Christ. For a disciplinary measure, such as he intends to order, can only be carried out in the right way by being executed solely in the love which we, as His children, constantly receive from God, and in the patience with which Christ bears with all of our weaknesses.

There now follows the direction for which preparation had been made in the preceding, and which with a certain solemnity he declares has been given in the name, i. e. at the command of Christ. They are to discontinue social intercourse with every brother who is walking after the manner that in the first letter has already been declared disorderly, and not after the

which ¹they received of us. (7) For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; (8) neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: (9) not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us. (10) For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat. (11) For we hear of some that walk among you

¹ Some ancient authorities read ye.

manner which they have received from the examples of their teachers. They know without further instruction 7 how to follow these examples. For Paul and his companions certainly did not live among them in a disorderly 8 manner so that they had given up their regular work in their calling and were compelled to receive their daily bread from others as a gift. But, as he had already reminded them in the first letter, they had engaged in the work of their handicraft day and night, in order to support themselves and be a burden to no 9 one. The Apostle expressly emphasizes the fact that 10 the reason for this was not that they would not have been justified in asking for such support from the congregation in which they labored, since he claims this right, according to 1 Cor. ix., on the basis of the word of Christ, for all those who proclaim the gospel. But it had rather been his intention thereby to give them an example in following the general rule of life, which he had inculcated already when he was with them, namely, that if a person is unwilling 11 to work, neither should he eat. The Apostle gives the reason why he again points to his own example. For he and his companions hear that some in Thessalonica do not walk in an orderly way, but neglect their regular callings and devote their time to things which are none of their business. The Apostle evidently has in mind

II THESSALONIANS

[III, 13-15]

disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. (12) Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. (13) But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing. (14) And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. (15) And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

-
- their occupation with the question as to the return of Christ and of the last things in general. To these
- 12 people he gives the direction and admonishes them with special reference to the authority which has been given to him in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are to abstain from all occupation with such things, and are to engage in their regular pursuits, so that they can earn their daily bread themselves, and need not, on ac-
- 13 count of their pious idleness beg it of others. But he admonishes the whole congregation to be tireless in doing what is right, because others think that they can show their piety in an easier manner. With this he returns to the special direction with which he
- 14 started out. In this letter, in the name of himself and his companions, he has clearly stated what he requires of them. If, then, any one is yet disobedient to these words, they are to mark him as such an one with whom they can have no social intercourse, so that he would thereby be put to shame before the entire congregation, and thus be made better. The Apostle probably also intended to prove to the non-Christians, that the congregation will have nothing to do with such
- 15 pious idlers. This does not exclude the idea that they were not to regard such an one as an enemy, but were in a brotherly manner to admonish him to change. The prayer and the petition of the Apostle to God, who determines concerning the true condition of the soul,

(16) Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all.

(17) The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. (18) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

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- go far beyond this quieting of the disturbance which these men had probably brought into the congregation. His prayer is that God would at all times give them peace, amid all trials which might disturb this peace, and in every way in which the workings of His grace
- 16 could preserve and restore to them this peace. But in the wish that the Lord may be with them all, he expressly includes also the erring brethren, who more than others need the help of God's Spirit in order to regain the right path.
- 17 Pointing to the blessing and prayer with which his Epistles generally close, the Apostle says that he has written this petition with his own hand and has added it to the letter, the rest of which he had dictated. Evidently it was such cases as those referred to in ii. 2 which induced the Apostle to add with his own hand a postscript to his letters, by which the readers might see that these were genuine. They are merely to note his handwriting, which they can already see in this intro-
- 18 duction to the closing blessing. The latter reads exactly as in 1 Thess. v. 28, excepting that it includes all, even the erring brethren.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY

I Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour, and Christ Jesus our hope ;
(2) unto Timothy, my true child in faith : Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul calls himself an Apostle of Christ to indicate, 1
that he is writing a letter not of friendship but of an
official character. For since he is by divine command
an Apostle he dare not write as he otherwise would do
to his friend Timothy. He feels bound to declare that
he is speaking to him in his official capacity. But how
willing he is to follow this command, he points out by
designating God as our Deliverer, i. e. as the One who
has made all arrangements for delivering us from eter-
nal destruction and thereby for our salvation. But at
the same time he refers this command to Christ, who
transmitted it to him when He sent him to preach.
Christ is the Mediator of our hope, since by carrying out
the divine redemptive purpose He brings us to the goal 2
of our hopes. He calls Timothy his genuine child, be-
cause the latter, through the faith which he had awak-
ened in him, had been begotten in a higher than a physi-
cal sense as his child. He thereby points out, why he
needed such special motives, in not addressing himself
to him with the words of fatherly affection, but in his
official capacity. He expands the customary salutation
by a reference to the mercy of God, which induced Him
to have compassion upon us and to become our De-
liverer. But as usual he bases everything that he

(3) As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, (4) neither to give heed to

wishes Timothy to do upon God and Christ, because the fatherly love of God bestows upon us everything that He has determined for our redemption through the kingly activity of Christ as our exalted Lord.

- 8 The Apostle had been with Timothy in Ephesus ; and, when he was compelled to go to Macedonia, he had asked him to remain behind in order to counteract certain doctrinal heresies in Ephesus, which he had noticed there and for the removal of which he had not found the time. The matter involved certain persons, who did not exactly antagonize or falsify the true doctrine of the Gospel, but in their teaching devoted themselves to entirely different things than those of which the gospel treats. Of what kind these were we can conclude only
- 4 from the fact, that Timothy was to bid them not only cease teaching these strange things, but also not to direct their attention to imaginary stories which had grown up like weeds around the narratives of the Old Testament, nor to the endless genealogical lists into which tradition had farther expanded those in the Old Testament. For as the Apostle bases his prohibition on the ground that these will only lead to further new investigations, it is clear that all kinds of secret and esoteric knowledge was developed out of these, which naturally was a different kind in the case of each interpreter. At any rate, this exhibited nothing of that faith which, according to the order that prevails in His house, i. e. in the church of God, is to offer the only material for all teaching. In reality, in harmony with the beginning of this sentence, there should now follow a statement as to what Timothy, in accordance with these injunctions,

I TIMOTHY

[I, 5-6]

fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a ¹ dispensation of God which is in faith ; *so do I now.* (5) But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned : (6) from which things some having ² swerved have turned aside unto

¹ Or, *stewardship*. See 1 Cor. 9. 17.

² Gr. *missed the mark*. ch. 6. 21 ; 2 Tim. 2. 18.

should do. But as this results as a matter of course from that which he commanded him, Paul drops the apodosis of this sentence, in order to add a word concerning the purpose of this command. For since the 5 investigations, which are concerned about this newly discovered source of wisdom, purpose only to make one's own wisdom prominent, and in doing so necessarily call forth quarrels and contentions through the great difference of opinions they produce, the practical purpose of this command was Christian love. But Paul means by this a love which comes from a heart that is free from impurity and of which one is conscious in a good conscience, and which comes from a pure faith, that is of a kind that is not merely imagined so to be by ourselves or by others. The Apostle refers to this source of true love because those people, whose doctrinal aberrations were to be forbidden them, had failed to attain this. For the occupation with these things, which does nothing but produce new investigations, cannot possibly proceed from a pure heart of which they are conscious in a good conscience, nor from an unadulterated faith, because this would induce them to direct their attention to that which pertains to such a faith. And for these very reasons they had departed from the right way of the gospel proclamation, which according to the order of God is to consist alone in the preaching of faith, and had applied themselves to the talk about things which are not at all matters of truth and could arouse only quarrels and contentions instead of love.

vain talking : (7) desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm. (8) But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, (9) as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for ¹murderers of fathers and ¹murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

¹ Or, *emitters*.

- 7 While they pretend to find a deeper wisdom in the Old Testament law through the wisdom that they had spun out of these fables and genealogical lists, they know neither what they are saying, since they themselves had no clear conception of what they mean by their imaginary deep doctrines, nor what those things really were concerning which they set up such confident claims. There must then have been all kind of mysterious things, all kinds of religious problems, on which they claimed through their new-fashioned interpretation of the law to have secured further information and concerning which
- 8 in reality they could know nothing. The Apostle sets up against this abuse of the law the Christian consciousness concerning the proper use of the law, in harmony with its nature, which can no longer be good, i. e.
- 9 conducive to redemption, if it is made the source of a secret knowledge and the means for unfruitful speculations. For this consciousness tells us, that a law is not intended for a righteous man, i. e. one who is guided by the divine will as his norm, but for those who are not willing to be bound by any law nor to submit to any authority, who do not fear God nor do His will, who are themselves impious and consider all holy things profane. The Apostle makes this clear in a series of gross sins, which in a most manifest way require the discipline of the law, and at the conclusion goes over to all whatever of his sinful being may yet adhere to him who is living properly. A law must be given

I TIMOTHY

[I, 10-11

(10) for fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for menstealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the ¹sound ²doctrine; (11) according to the ³gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

¹ Gr. *healthful*.

² Or, *teaching*.

³ Gr. *good tidings*. See Mt. 4 marg.

to uncover and to forbid everything that is antagonistic to the moral conduct that springs from the true doctrine. Out of this consciousness as to the general 10 character of law, it is seen how the Old Testament law is to be used. It is first of all here for the non-Christians, who are thereby to be led to a knowledge of their sins and to the need of redemption. But it can also teach the Christians to recognize and to put aside everything that is contrary to the true doctrine. But then, naturally, the law must be taken in its literal sense as a revelation of the divine will and not as the source of a secret wisdom, the moral consequences of which can only be such as again to make the discipline of the law necessary. For this consciousness of the true use of the 11 Old Testament law the Apostle appeals to the gospel, which proclaims the glory of the blessed God as that which is to be given to the believers. Then it is indeed clear, that the law is not intended for those who have been justified by grace through faith and who accordingly need not be made so through the law, for the purpose of uncovering for them and putting aside weaknesses in the course of their moral development. With this gospel of freedom from the law Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, had been specially entrusted, while the Apostles of the circumcision still adhered to the obligation of the law, at least for the Jewish Christians.

In contrast to these doctrinal aberrations Paul was in a condition to point to himself as an example of the true contents of the gospel as revealed by his personal

(12) I thank him that ¹ enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to *his* service; (13) though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; (14) and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ

¹ Some ancient authorities read *enableth*.

- 12 experience of redemption. He certainly had reason to feel the deepest gratitude to our exalted Lord Christ, who had given him the strength for the proclamation of the gospel which had been entrusted to him, because, when He appointed the Apostle at his call to a service
- 13 which demanded the greatest faithfulness, He had credited him with this faithfulness. But what this means, the Apostle makes clear, by stating, that he had formerly been a blasphemer of Christ, a persecutor of His congregation and an arrogant transgressor, who could be considered deserving only of the severest punishment and not in the slightest measure trustworthy. And yet he had received mercy, and was not left to the destruction which he had richly deserved, but had even been called to the service of Christ. Of course this had been possible only because what he had done to Christ and to His congregation he had done in ignorance and not in intentional hardening against the truth. But his ignorance was one part of his guilt and had brought him into the depths of destruction. And still more. When faith had been worked in him through the grace of God which he had experienced in his call, and love
- 14 had been produced, such as is brought forth in the living communion with Christ, then the grace of God first became superabundantly rich in him, His servant, as this grace accompanied his faith and the zeal of his love with visible blessings. From this personal experience of his life it is clear, that this prohibition of these doctrinal aberrations, which the Apostle enjoins upon Tim-

Jesus. (15) Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief : (16) howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life. (17) Now unto the King ¹eternal, ²immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory ³for ever and ever. Amen.

¹Gr. *of the ages*. Comp. Heb. 1. 2 ; Rev. 15. 3.
²Gr. *incorruptible*. ³Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

othy, does not pertain to a contention about different opinions, but to the substitution, in place of these questionable and confused speculations, of a word which 15 as such is worthy of belief and is deserving of every approval, even of that demanding the highest evidence. But this is the word of the Evangelical message of redemption, according to which the Saviour Jesus, when He became man, came into the world, in order to save sinners. For the fact that he was saved who had formerly persecuted the congregation, though the heinousness of his sin had surpassed all other sins, is a proof of this fact. For the greatness of his sins had not excluded him from such deliverance ; but rather he had 16 received mercy, that Jesus Christ might show forth first in his case the whole fulness of patience which He ever bore with such powerful and enduring enmity. It was to be shown by the analogy of his case what kind of people are to attain eternal life through the confidence of redemption in Him. Not a certain limited number of sinners are to experience such longsuffering, but all, even those who were the grossest transgressors and had in the past challenged this longsuffering. With a doxology that may perhaps at that time already have been in common use in the congregation, the Apostle 17 closes this retrospective view of his personal experience. This doxology is directed to the ultimate Author of the redemption which has been imparted to him,

(18) This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare; (19) holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: (20) of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

who rules the world ages, because in these already He arranges that which is to be completed in the future.

- After the Apostle has in this way from all sides
18 given the reasons for his instructions to his spiritual son, he again impresses these upon him, with an appeal to the prophetic voices which at that time when Paul took him into his service had pointed him out as especially adapted for this position as assistant. From these he was to draw courage and strength to carry
19 on a good fight against erroneous teachings. He needed for this nothing but faith and a good conscience, which would tell him, that he had sought nothing but his own redemption. This consciousness of a pure motive in striving for the truth and for redemption, several of those, whose errors Timothy was to combat, had wantonly cast from them, not considering it worth while to devote their efforts exclusively to the gospel. For this reason they had suffered shipwreck in the faith which can be directed only to the gospel. As an example of
20 this Paul cites the cases of two men, mentioning them by name, against whom he had to take the strongest disciplinary measures, which he had on one occasion taken with regard to the man guilty of incest (cf. 1 Cor. v. 5). In this case also this was to lead to their repentance and to cause them to cease from their blasphemies. Evidently these men, when he reproved their erroneous teachings, had rejected his authority by slandering his character, and thereby shown how far they had already

II I exhort therefore, first of all, ¹ that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men ; (2) for kings and all that are in high place ; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. (3) This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour ; (4) who

¹ Gr. to make supplications, &c.

departed from the faith in the gospel which he represented.

The next thing which the Apostle enjoins upon Timothy is the care for order in the public services of the congregation. He desires first of all that the prayers 1 which are rendered in these services, be these petitions of any kind or thanksgivings, shall always look to the interests of all men. He mentions in particular those who as sole rulers stand at the head of the state, as also all representatives of the government, who occupy any prominent position, as the proper objects for whom they are to pray. Only in this way can they lead a 2 proper life that is withdrawn from the world and does not suffer itself by any evil that it has experienced to become anxious or angry, and a life that is quiet, which neither by speech nor action tries to influence external circumstances. For the Christian, piety alone is the correct thing, which with prayer and thanksgiving entrusts to God everything that the Christian experiences or wishes from men about him and especially from the government, as also a dignified conduct which is not forced from its quiet retirement by anything that may happen to it. Such a life, which of a necessity brings 3 forth the petitions for all men and for the government in particular as demanded by the Apostle, is valuable before God and certain of a pleasing reception, because He, who is our Saviour, desires that all men should be saved, and, what is absolutely necessary for 4 their salvation, attain to a knowledge of the truth. In

would have all men be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. (5) For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus, (6) who gave himself a ransom for all ; the testimony *to be borne* in its own times ; (7) whereunto I was appointed a ¹ preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

¹ Gr. *herald*.

his all-comprehensive petitions and thanksgivings the Christian regards as his own the redemptive purpose of God which includes all men. The fact that there is but one way of salvation, which we must learn to know, in order to be saved, the Apostle bases on the fact, that there is but one God, who has arranged this way, and
 5 one Mediator between God and men, who prepares this salvation for them, namely, Jesus Christ. The fact that Jesus is only designated as a man, already points to this, that His office as Mediator, according to the redemptive purposes of God, is intended for all who, like
 6 Himself, are human beings. He it was who gave Himself up to death, and through this act so precious in the sight of God, enabled Him to release the sinners from the guilt of their sin, because God accepted His death as a satisfactory ransom. Since Christ has paid this ransom for all, it is clear, that the way to salvation established by God is intended for all. But in order that all may attain to a knowledge of this way of redemption, which alone can bring salvation, it was necessary that this self-sacrifice on the part of the *one* Mediator of redemption should be proclaimed at the proper time, which could be done only then when the work of redemption had been finished by Him. For the purpose of furnishing this testimony Paul has been
 7 selected, sent out as an Apostle, in order to proclaim with the voice of a herald, what he could testify from his own personal experience. The fact indeed that he

(8) I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and ¹disputing. (9) In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with

¹Or, *doubting*.

had been specially called to be a teacher of the Gentiles, proved that this proclamation was intended for all mankind. For this call he can only appeal to his own truthfulness, which makes all falsehoods impossible. He is to teach the Gentiles, so that they may attain to the knowledge of the truth, and as this cannot take place, without their being convinced of the truth of his redemptive message, he must instruct them in faith as also in the truth. From all these considerations Timothy is naturally to support his admonition to offer petitions and thanksgiving for all men.

The Apostle proceeds to discuss how he is to offer the public prayers of which he has spoken. In this connection he emphasizes the fact, that every place where the members of the congregation assemble for prayer, as in the smaller circles that gather in the different houses, and not merely the place where the entire congregation comes together, is consecrated to God, which fact is to determine the attitude of the men when they pray. Only consecrated hands are to be raised in prayer, i. e. only with consecrated mind are men to proceed to prayer. Such a mind is inconsistent with any anger or quarreling. Amid the doctrinal controversies of the present times it might easily happen that those who preached this new wisdom in the congregation themselves would begin to quarrel about their pretended new discoveries. In the same way it was befitting the women to appear in modest apparel during this solemn act. This would show good taste and propriety. They are indeed to beautify themselves for the public service, but with real womanly decorum,

shamefastness and sobriety ; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment ; (10) but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works. (11) Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. (12) But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness. (13) For Adam was first formed, then Eve ;

which does not aim at attracting the attention of the men, and with the modesty which restrains all impure emotions by thoughtful self-control. Then they will try to beautify themselves, not by the platting of their hair, by which women try to increase the natural beauty of the head, and by ornaments of gold, pearls and costly garments, with which they decorate other
10 parts of the body, but by their zeal for virtue, which is evidenced in good works, as this is always befitting to women, who profess to fear God, and thereby promise to Him a corresponding life.

Then the Apostle proceeds to discuss the conduct
11 of the women in the public services in general. If in these assemblies the men indeed, by the questions that they raise and by the doubts which they utter, seek further instruction, it is the duty of the women to listen only in silence in order to learn, because all prominence on their part in the meeting of the men is
12 contrary to the natural subordination of the wife to the husband. Least of all are they permitted by the Apostle to deliver public discourses for the purpose of teaching, because he who teaches rules the audience and tells others what they are to believe and to do. This would be an independent domination over the man on the part of the woman, which is contrary to the natural relation of the woman to the man. Such a relation demands a quiet abstaining from all assumption
13 of that rulership that belongs to the man. The Apostle bases this on the fact, that according to the history

(14) and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression : (15) but she shall be saved through ¹ her childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.

¹ Or, *the childbearing.* Comp. Gal. 4. 4.

of the creation, Adam was formed first, and accordingly existed for a time without a woman, and hence could not in any way have been dependent on any leadership on the part of the woman, who was only created after him. In the same way he refers to the story of the fall. For it was not Adam who was deceived by the serpent, but he only obeyed the voice of his wife (Gen. iii. 12). It 14 was the woman who transgressed, and was misled by the words of the serpent. From this it follows that the woman is more easily susceptible to seduction than the man, and accordingly needs the leadership of the man, and not vice versa. From what is said at this place concerning the first woman, the Apostle proceeds to that which is applicable to the woman in general. 15 If it is asked how she is to attain to that goal for which everybody is striving, namely, deliverance from eternal destruction, the woman is not to strive to obtain this by forcing herself into a calling which is denied her by nature, but by the fulfilment of her natural mission, which surely is the propagation of the race. The chief matter of importance for women is, that they fulfil the duties upon which redemption is based for all, namely, constancy in the faith, in love as the cardinal virtue of Christianity, and in sanctification in its most comprehensive sense, such as is the fruit of a new state of grace. For them a chaste modesty is especially necessary, which suppresses every unwomanly impulse by a thoughtful self-control, and therewith every tendency to seek a calling that lies outside of the natural limitation of the woman's sphere, and does not befit her.

III ¹ Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a ² bishop, he desireth a good work. (2) The ² bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to

¹ Some connect the words *Faithful is the saying* with the preceding paragraph. ² Or, overseer.

Further, Timothy is to see to it that the necessary
 1 conditions for the officers of the church are not to be lost sight of when these offices are filled. The Apostle begins his directions on this subject with the statement that is expressly declared to be an undoubted fact, namely, that if a person, as it were, stretches out his hand for the office of supervision in the congregation, he is desiring a really honorable activity. In the congregation in Ephesus, which had been established years ago, the desire of having a share in the management of the affairs of the congregation, could already make itself felt. In this it is presupposed that this express inclination was based on an especial ability for the work. For this reason the Apostle deduces from the character of this office in what particulars the incumbent
 2 is to be suitable for the position. The first requirement is that even he who makes the severest demands can find no reason for criticising such an official. For this reason the first demand made is that the candidate has been the husband of only *one* wife, because a second marriage, if God has deprived a man of his wife by death, in the conviction of the age was regarded as a proof of incontinence, and for this reason would lower the bishop in the eyes of his congregation. To this is added the demand for sobriety in judgment which does not permit itself to be darkened by even the most glittering of advantages; for the self-control which keeps a man steadily in check and suppresses all excitement that goes beyond the normal and thoughtful measure; and finally, for the proper, hon-

teach ; (3) ¹ no brawler, no striker ; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money ; (4) one that ruleth well his own house,

¹ Or, *not quarrelsome over wine.*

orable attitude, which is only the external form in which these two virtues appear. But as in all these things the exclusion of a moral stigma is not included, which may characterize him who seeks such an office, there now follow also two positive virtues, namely, hospitality, which offers to brethren on a journey what they stand in need of, and the ability to teach, which enables a bishop to serve his own congregation in accordance with the needs of the time. The letters of the Apostle to his pupils indeed show in many cases his purpose of uniting the office of teaching, which originally was entirely free in the congregation, with the office of congregational control, and in that way to prevent the aberrations in doctrinal matters, which were 3 becoming more and more dangerous. If the following demand, on the other hand, is directed against two gross phases of immorality, namely, drunkenness and contentiousness, the contrast already shows, that the purpose is only to draw attention to the worst cases of disagreement, which arise, if sufficient attention is not paid to the entire moral status as such, without it being thereby said that only these most grievous cases are to exclude people from office in the congregation. For he now mentions the reasonable mildness, which makes all quarrels as such impossible ; and the same is probably true of the absence of all greed for money. Entirely 4 unique in its reference to the office of leadership in the congregation is the demand, that the bishop shall be approved in the management of his own household, and is to govern this with the dignity that is befitting the head of a family. As a proof of this approved state the Apostle mentions the fact, that, if he

having *his* children in subjection with all gravity ; (5) (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God ?) (6) not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the ¹condemnation of the devil. (7) Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without ; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

¹ *Gr. judgment.*

has children, these are to show their subordination to him, thus evincing their respect for his position as head of the household. At this place the Apostle, as it were
 5 parenthetically, yet expressly adds the reflection, which explains the demand, namely, that the congregation too is a household, as the family is, and in this case a household of God. He, therefore, who cannot manage his household can still less show in the congregation the qualities required for its direction. Finally, the Apostle declares that those who have been recently converted are not to be admitted to congregational
 6 offices, because these men, on account of the zeal that springs from their first love might appear to be the proper persons for such offices, but, as he fears, may fail in the intoxication of pride in such preferment, to notice when they make mistakes, which would expose them to the charges of the slanderers. For the congregation is surrounded on all sides by those who only
 7 wait for an opportunity to speak ill of them. But the bishop must not only avoid any act which would give occasion for criticism, but must rather have a good report among those who are outside of the congregation. For if the latter detect even the slightest flaw in his past, he will become the object of the reproaches of the slanderers, who will catch him as in a snare, in order to prove in his case, what kind of people those are whom the Christians choose to be their officials. A religion which purposed to save sinners, could easily find its highest triumph in those, who formerly had been the

- (8) Deacons in like manner *must be* grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre ;
(9) holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
-

worst sinners ; but these, for this very reason, did not appear to be the proper persons to represent the congregation before the world.

The Apostle proceeds to describe the requirements for the office of deacon, whose work we are not fully acquainted with, but who probably had specially to attend to the care of the poor and to the execution of the decisions which the congregational elders or the bishops reached. These too are at all times to fulfil these services, humble though they be, with the same dignity, which was regarded as a matter of course in the case of the leaders of the congregation, because they too did their work in the name of the congregation. They are not to be double-tongued, because if in their dealings with the members they talk one way with this person and another way with the other, they forfeit the confidence of the congregation. They are also not to be addicted to wine, as their calling will often take them into houses and the hospitality that will be offered them there could easily lead them to yield to their appetite instead of attending to their business. Above all, they must not be greedy of gain, since probably in connection with the funds for the poor they were also entrusted with the contributions to the congregational treasury, and this could easily become a temptation to them to enrich themselves in an unlawful manner. But this demand especially they could satisfy only if they possessed their faith in a pure conscience ; for their faith, since it was hidden in their hearts, could not be examined by anybody else, and if this conscience was not contaminated by the consciousness that this faith had only been

III, 10-12] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

(10) And let these also first be proved ; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless. (11) Women in like manner *must* be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. (12) Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling *their* chil-

feigned in order to secure a profitable position in the
10 congregation. But even those, whose qualifications, as
demanded above, could only be tested in the actual
performance of their duties, as was the case with the
bishops shall be examined as to their past, and only when
it appears that this is beyond criticism are they to be ad-
11 mitted to the service of the congregation. But in their
case the examination must also be extended to their
wives, who were compelled in many cases to assist them
in their official work. These too must be distinguished by
a proper dignity, as is the case with their husbands, be-
cause undignified conduct on the part of the wife de-
prives a man and the office he holds of their dignity.
They must not be inclined to spread evil reports because
they could thus easily put to a bad use the knowledge of
many details which the deacon learned concerning the
members of the congregation and their families, and
could spread such matters abroad. They are to be sober
in their judgment, in order not to influence through
their unnatural excitement the official activity of their
husbands. They are to be faithful in all things, even
in those cases where they go beyond their natural call-
ing and assist their husbands in their official business.
The Apostle has inserted here the demands made of
the wives of the deacons, because he intends further to
12 demand that the family life of the latter be taken into
consideration. These too, as in the case with the bishops,
are to be men but once married, and to exercise good
government over their children and the rest of their
household. But as these demands have in themselves

dren and their own houses well. (13) For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

(14) These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; (15) but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know ¹ how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ² ground

¹ Or, *how thou oughtest to behave thyself.*

² Or, *stay.*

nothing to do with the office of the deacon, Paul expressly assigns as a reason for making them that which they naturally acquired through the proper discharge of this office. Notwithstanding the rather humble character of the service which they render, they acquire thereby relatively higher honor in the estimation of the congregation, and this honorable position places upon them the obligation to be models to the congregation in their private family life. The full assurance in their work in the congregation, which corresponds to this position of honor, is not indeed to be based on vain self-confidence, but upon their confidence in redemption through Christ; but it would be impaired by the consciousness of any taint in the eyes of the congregation. 13

The directions given in reference to the public service and the congregational offices evidently presuppose that Timothy will be called upon still to stand for some time at the head of the congregational affairs at Ephesus. Hence the Apostle says, that he wrote to him in this strain, although he hopes soon to return himself in order to tell his pupil how to prepare things which he himself could finally arrange on his next visit. Evidently he had already thought it possible, that his return might be delayed for some time, and in view of this eventuality he gives his representative these directions, so that the latter might know how men and women, bishops and deacons were to conduct themselves in the family of God. As such he had 14 15

of the truth. (16) And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness ;

¹ He who was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the spirit,
Seen of angels,
Preached among the ² nations,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

¹ The word *God*, in place of *He who*, rests on no sufficient ancient evidence. Some ancient authorities read *which*. ² Or, *Gentiles*.

already designated the congregation, when he described the family of the bishop as its type (cf iii. 5). And here he expressly emphasizes the fact that the congregation entrusted to Timothy is a congregation of God, who, as the Living God, demands and must demand, that in the congregation everything is done according to His will. For this reason Timothy must be instructed, what order is prescribed in accordance with His will for the public services as also for the leadership in the congregation and for the service in the congregation. But this is clear from the fact, that in this congregation the truth has found an abiding-place in the midst of the world, because the congregation upholds this truth as a column supports a roof ; or because the truth in the congregation has secured a permanent existence, like that which is built upon a firm foundation. But because the truth, which shows the right way to redemption, at the same time regulates practical life, the congregation, as its bearer and preserver in the world, must have its firm ordinances in which it is a shining example to the world ; and for this reason Timothy must be perfectly acquainted with these ordinances. Paul illustrates the importance of the mission which the congregation has therein received by designating

16 this truth as a matter that on all hands is recognized as something most valuable, namely, as a mystery that is entrusted solely to pure godliness, of which it is a

IV But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing

characteristic that at all times and places it submits to the will of God. For the kernel and center of this truth is Christ, in whom the whole mystery of the divine redemptive counsel has been made known, and of which no man knows or can know anything through himself. Paul describes the contents of this mystery with a reference to the words of an old Christian hymn in which it is said of Christ that He existed before time began, but had been entirely unknown to the world, had now been made known to the world through His historical appearance in the flesh. His claim to be that which He was, namely, the Mediator of our redemption, is justified by the fact, that He, through the divine Spirit within Him, had been raised from the dead (cf. Rom. i. 4). In consequence of the exaltation that resulted from His resurrection He has appeared to heavenly beings, such as the angels are; and among the nations which fill the whole circuit of the earth He has been proclaimed through the Apostolic message of redemption. By the fact that faith in Christ, had been provided through this proclamation, He has been glorified in the world, as He has been glorified among the inhabitants of heaven through His reception into the heavenly glory. In this way these words form the solemn conclusion of his admonitions.

Although apparently beginning with the enumeration of dangers that are far distant, the Apostle nevertheless is only preparing to give personal admonitions to Timothy. The fact that the Church is the preserver 1 of the truth does not make it impossible that, as the prophetic spirit had already in predictions, given here and there, stated in clear and unmistakable terms,

spirits and doctrines of demons, (2) through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, ¹ branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; (3) forbidding to marry, *and commanding to ab-*

¹ Or, *seared*.

in later times certain persons would fall away from the faith. The reason for this is to be found in the fact, that they subject themselves to misleading spirits, which later will produce erroneous doctrines and will have them accept teachings which proceed from the demons. From this it is clear, that these heretical teachers are to be sought for among the Gentiles, who are in the special power of the demons. Such heresies
2 could gain, of course, no influence over believers, unless taught by men who wore the hypocritical garb of false teachers, and affected to be devoted to special abstinence. In reality they are branded in their own conscience, i. e. they are perfectly aware of the sinful character which they know how to hide under the hypocrit-
3 ical practise of such abstinence. To what degree their teachings are of a devilish character, is clear from the fact, that they prohibit marriage, which was possible only on the basis of heathen opinions, which denied that man and woman were by God created for each other. Upon this subject the Apostle does not enter more fully, because such notions had not yet found a place among the Christians of that time. But when those teachers of falsehood from among the Gentiles, who did not consider the world as the creation of God, tried to establish also abstinence from certain foods, the Apostle knew only too well from his experience in Rome and in Colossæ, that even the Christians also were inclined to such ascetic selections of foods, even though it be from altogether different motives. In order, then, to condemn this in all of its forms, the Apostle emphasizes the fact, that God has certainly created all foods, in order

stain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. (4) For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving : (5) for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer.

(6) If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words

that we may take them from His hands and thank Him for them. True, this is only the case in the fullest sense of the term for the believers and for those who have been thoroughly taught to know the truth. For to the Jews who were yet unbelievers, many foods were denied by the law; and for the weak Christians, who took offense at certain foods, the use of these was contrary to their conscience and therefore not allowed. In 4 reality, however, everything that God has created is good, and therefore for no reason is its use to be prohibited, though with the presupposition, that it is received with thanksgiving. If it were to be said that what is purely natural lacks that consecration to God which is characteristic of the Christians and would harm these, it is yet true as a matter of fact that it is sanctified by this thanksgiving, i. e. is transferred into 5 the category of those things which are consecrated to God. For in the table prayer, which was at that time already a general custom, the food is brought before God with the Old Testament word of prayer, and it receives from Him the same sanctity which the Christian has received in his baptism.

These principles in reference to the use of foods Timothy 6 is to teach the members of the congregation. Paul calls them his brethren, because Timothy is to consider these things as having been said to himself also. Many things in this letter indicate, that he too was inclined to such ascetic principles. But when he impresses

of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed *until now* : (7) but refuse profane and old wives' fables. And exercise thyself unto godliness : (8) for bodily exercise is profitable ¹ for a little ; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which

¹ Or, *for little*.

these truths upon the Christians, he will do Christ a valuable service if he protects them against the deceptions that are to threaten them in later times. But this, of course, he can only do if he himself receives his constant nourishment from these words, in which his faith finds its expression as also the correct doctrine, which alone can furnish the correct principles for the use of everything that God has created. But Timothy has been trying to hold fast to this doctrine and is trying to do so, in order to use it constantly as food for his spiritual life. It is true, that some men were in recent times recommending as such food those fables, concerning which the Apostle had spoken in the beginning of his letter, and which
7 he at this place describes as having nothing in common with what is holy, and even as old women's gossip. These Timothy is decidedly to reject. But rather, as a faithful servant of Christ, is he to engage only in those exercises which serve the purposes of true godliness, by enabling him to suppress all the impulses that are antagonistic to it. At this place already there is found in the background the contrast of the exercises in the external abstinence demanded by asceticism. Paul does not condemn such ascetics in so far as they seek to gain
8 the mastery over the passions of the body. But he expressly states that such bodily exercises have only a small benefit ; on the other hand, the godliness, which he would have them develop through the exercises that he has recommended, is of comprehensive value, since it promises blessings to the present and to the future

I TIMOTHY

[IV, 9-13]

is to come. (9) Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance. (10) For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe. (11) These things command and teach. (12) Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity. (13) Till I come,

life. How creditable and worthy of all acceptance this 9 word is, is abundantly clear from the fact, that he and those like him, because of this credibility and on account of this high value of the word, labor hard and endure 10 all disgrace, because they have placed their hopes and still place them on a living God, who can and will fulfil such promises. For it is He who has made His redemptive arrangement for the good of mankind, but most of all for the believers, whom He has especially called for this end, and who accordingly do not shrink from any trouble or humiliation to attain to the promised blessing.

This reasonable asceticism which conduces to godli- 11 ness, Timothy is to recommend on all occasions, and at the same time to give instructions in the reasons given by the Apostle why these alone are obligatory. In 12 order that no one may despise him on account of his youth, he is to be an example to the believers in all things, in everything that he speaks and does, in love, as also in the fountain of all love, namely, in faith, or, in a word, in moral purity. In this case Timothy need have no fear that they will think slightly of him; his maturity in Christian life gives him, even in his youthful years, the joyfulness to teach and to give directions also to the older members of the congregation. But in order to overcome his bashfulness altogether, Paul 13 gives Timothy the express instruction until his return, the time of which is yet uncertain, to act as his

give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. (14) Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (15) Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly

representative in everything which he himself would carry on for the purpose of developing the congregational life. He is thinking in this connection especially of his co-operation in the public service of the congregation, as he himself was otherwise accustomed to do. Timothy is permanently to take charge of the reading of the Scriptures, with which, as a matter of course, was connected an explanation of the Old Testament passages that had been read, and then to deliver an exhortatory address, and especially to be diligent in teaching, which in those times of doctrinal errors was
14 doubly necessary. It is true that this injunction in the case of Timothy suggests the question whether he, perchance, was not too young in point of years. But he is not to regard lightly the gift that God has given him in this direction, and which he, without a doubt, possessed. Paul reminds him, how in his native town the office of Apostolic assistant had been entrusted to him. However this had not taken place in obedience to human counsel, but because prophetic voices had declared him adapted for this work, and the Spirit, who had called forth these voices, had also intended to give to him the equipment of gifts needed for this office. But when in solemn conclave the entire presbyterial college had placed their hands upon him, in order to call down upon him through prayer this Spirit, he certainly could be sure not only that he had received these gifts, but also that the congregation, through their most worthy representatives, had recognized his fitness
15 for the office. These things he is to consider and to

I TIMOTHY

[V, 1-2]

to them ; that thy progress may be manifest unto all. (16)
Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in
these things ; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself
and them that hear thee.

V Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father ; the
younger men as brethren : (2) the elder women as

guide his entire conduct thereby, so that all backward-
ness in the use of his gifts may be overcome. Then his
constant progress in furnishing the evidences of these
gifts will become manifest to all, and thereby all disre-
gard of him on account of his youth will disappear. It is 16
only necessary for him to watch over himself, by becom-
ing more and more a model for the congregation, and
over his teaching work, by doing it at all times joyfully
and boldly. He is to continue in faith, and then he
will not only save himself through the proof of his per-
formance of duty, but also the congregation that is en-
trusted to him through his example and instruction in
correct Christian living. In this matter there is yet
need of receptive hearing, without which his teaching
naturally can have no success.

After speaking of Timothy's activity in the public 1
services of the church, Paul proceeds to discuss the
subject of private pastoral work, in which he is to pay
due regard to the difference in age and sex. Although
he is not to permit himself to be despised on account of
his youth, he is nevertheless to take this into considera-
tion in his work in the congregation, and for that rea-
son is not to approach with harshness those who are
older in years than himself, but to admonish them with
the respect which is proper in dealing with an older
person, who might be his father. Those who are
younger than himself, he is to admonish mindful of the
brotherly equality between himself and them, and to do 2

mothers; the younger as sisters, in all purity. (3) Honor widows that are widows indeed. (4) But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God. (5) Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and

- this to older women with the respect due to a mother, and to younger women as sisters, but avoiding all familiarity which might incur even the slightest suspicion of impurity in sexual matters. In this connection Paul begins to speak of the provisions to be made for the widows, which from the beginning had constituted a characteristic feature in the life of primitive Christianity (cf. Acts vi. 1). He demands of Timothy that he shall show special honor to widows. The meaning of this appears from what he adds when he says that he means only those who had been deprived not only of a husband, but also of a supporter and provider, and had no other relatives. From this it follows that they are to be especially honored as persons made by God dependent upon the protection of others. Examples of such honor to the destitute are found in the Old Testament, and this honor
- 3 is to be exhibited by providing for their support. For the Apostle expressly regards as the opposite the case of a widow who still has children or other descendants. In this case, then, if they do not do so of themselves, the latter are to learn to become providers for these widows, so that these are not deprived of support. He expressly declares this to be a duty of godliness which they have toward their families, in which mothers and grandmothers are primarily included, and as a recompense for the good things that they have received from
- 4 their ancestors, and which is pleasing in the sight of God. He furthermore states that a real widow, whom
- 5

continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. (6) But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth. (7) These things also command, that they may be without reproach. (8) But if any provideth not for his own,

he expressly declares to be one who is left alone entirely, puts her trust upon God alone, and commends herself to Him in constant prayer, for which reason he commands that she is to be honored as one under the protection of God, as children honor their parents, i. e. by supporting them. But a widow who has a competency, 6 and accordingly is in no need of a provider, and squanders her possessions in riotous living, such an one, although yet in the body, is already spiritually dead, and cannot be considered entitled to such honor. These directions for the right honoring of the widows and their limitation, Timothy is not to regard as having been given to him alone. He is to impart them to others, so that the conduct of the congregation in this matter be above reproach. To the children and the 7 grandchildren of the widows, of whom he has spoken 8 above, it is not necessary yet to give such instructions. For he who does not provide for those who are his, and especially for the members of his household in the narrow sense of the word, has denied the faith which should prompt him to perform all the more faithfully his natural duties. He says that such persons are not only as bad as, but are worse than unbelievers, who perform such duties, because of the law that is written in their hearts.

Special honor was bestowed upon certain widows, to whom a kind of an ecclesiastical office was entrusted, probably the oversight of the women contingent in the congregation. Such church widows had to be entered upon a special roll, so that it would be known to

and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. (9) Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old, *having been* the wife of one man, (10) well reported of for good works ; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work. (11) But younger widows refuse : for when they have waxed wanton against Christ, they desire to marry ;

-
- whom under given circumstances the members could
9 apply. Now the Apostle demands that such a widow shall not be under sixty years of age, and shall have been the wife of only one husband, because abstention from a second marriage was regarded as a special mark of continence (cf. Luke ii. 36, 37), and accordingly from the very outset gave such a woman the respect needed
10 for the fulfilment of this office. But she was also to have a good report because of her excellent works, Paul making it a special qualification that she should have approved herself in the rearing of children and in hospitality, and in all, even the meanest of the services of love, such as is characterized by the washing of feet, and in the assistance she had rendered to those in need. He demands that she must not only have performed every good work, whenever an opportunity was offered for this, but must also diligently have sought the
11 opportunity for this purpose. Timothy is to refuse younger widows i. e. not to entrust them with this ecclesiastical office even if all kinds of reasons are given for this appointment. It might be possible, that the full strength of youth would exert itself in them and this would demand the satisfaction of their sexual impulse in a new marriage, whereby they would be drawn away from a service that is exclusively devoted to Christ. But in this case they would incur

I TIMOTHY

[V, 12-15]

(12) having condemnation, because they have rejected their first ¹pledge. (13) And withal they learn also to be idle, going about from house to house ; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. (14) I desire therefore that the younger ²widows marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling : (15) for already some are turned aside after Satan.

¹ Gr. *faith*.

² Or, women.

the charge of having fallen short in faithfulness to the 12
calling which they had accepted in the service of the
congregation and therefore to the service of Christ, by
having in a second marriage vowed entire submissive
and exclusive service to a husband. At the same time
Paul mentions a second reason why younger widows
are not to be admitted to this office. They can easily 13
become indolent and dissatisfied with the work of their
calling ; and as this compels them to go round a great
deal in the various houses, they will, instead of teach-
ing, only learn what they may subsequently discuss of
family secrets. If they were only indolent they could
at least do no harm ; but with this they join gossiping,
which spreads abroad these things which they have
heard, and curiosity, which meddles with things that
do not concern them, so that they speak of that of
which there is no need and in this way cause trouble.
For this reason the Apostle positively demands, that 14
the younger women are to marry and fulfil their duties
as mothers and housewives, in order not to give to the
adversaries of the Christians any occasion to revile
Christianity, of which they would certainly make ample
use. It is presupposed in this connection that these,
if they remain unmarried, would readily give themselves
up to fornication. This fear the Apostle bases on the 15
fact, that it has already occurred, that those who had
been striving for the honor of celibacy had become
the victims of fornication. They had already departed

(16) If any woman that believeth hath widows, let her relieve them, and let not the church be burdened ; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

(17) Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching.

from the right path of chastity and had followed Satan,
16 who had enticed them into the path of sin. Finally, the Apostle mentions, that the ecclesiastical widows also are to be supported by the congregation, if they have no claims on relatives. For if a believer, be it male or female, has widows in his relationship the support of them is incumbent upon him ; he is not to burden the congregation with their support. The contributions of the congregation are, to be given to those widows who have actually been deprived of their kinsmen. Congregational support accordingly is not to be given as a pay for services rendered, but even in the case of the ecclesiastical widows is not to be given except in case of need.

17 The elders too, i. e. those leaders of the congregation who on account of their official position were called bishops but as a rule were selected from among those who, already on account of their age, were revered in the congregation, are also, as was the case with the widows, the recipients of honor. But if they have excellently performed the duties of their office as heads of the congregation, i. e. in a manner that goes beyond the mere performance of duty, they are to be deemed worthy of double honor, as are the widows, who yet in their widowed condition do special services to the congregation. But this is most of all true of those who are exerting themselves in some office of speaking or in teaching. Hereit becomes perfectly clear, how important it was in the eyes of the Apostle that the work of teaching should be connected with the congregational offices, not only

(18) For the scripture saith, ¹Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treaded out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire. (19) Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at *the mouth* of two or three witnesses. (20) Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear.

¹ Dt. xxv. 4.

for the purpose of making sure that the work of teaching would be done, but also to protect the congregation against the doctrinal heresies that were spreading all 18 around them. In this case this duty of rendering double honor was already taught by the Scriptures, which demanded for the regularly called teacher that he should be supported by the congregation, and that under all circumstances, and not only in case of need, as with widows. Paul finds this demand, according to 1 Cor. ix. 9, in the passage in Deut. xxv. 4, the deeper meaning of which he understood according to the so-called allegorical interpretation. He connects this directly with the statement in Luke x. 7, which he presupposes was known to Timothy as a well known Saying of the Lord, because, according to 1 Cor. ix. 14, he finds in it the claims of those who proclaimed the Gospel to the support of the congregation.

The honor that is to be shown to the office of the 19 congregational elders, however, it to find its expression also in the rule, that Timothy is not under any circumstances to entertain a onesided and unsupported charge against them. The charge is to be confirmed by two or three witnesses. Only in this way could a charge, which even as it is would damage their honor, and of which they would afterwards prove themselves innocent, be 20 avoided. To this it is to be added, that such elders, who had really been guilty of a misdemeanor, are to be examined and censured not before the congregation, but only in the meeting of the elders, so that the others learn to fear such censure and the influence of the elders

(21) I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without ¹ prejudice, doing nothing by partiality. (22) Lay hands hastily on no

¹ Or, *preference*.

be not undermined in the congregation. While the disciplinary measures against the members of the congregation during the Apostolic times were enacted by the congregational meetings, there was no other court to try the elders than the Apostle himself or his representative. As this was the important matter in which Timothy was to act as the substitute of the Apostle, he solemnly calls upon God as witness for this admonition, which he gives herein to his assistant, in order that he may fear the punishment that is attached to the failure to comply with the exhortation. But he appeals also to Christ, who carries out the judgment of God, as also to the chosen angels, who surround the throne of God, and in whose presence he would have to be ashamed if they would witness his condemnation. He emphasizes the fact that in the exercise of these disciplinary measures against the presbyters, he is not to entertain any prejudice against a single one of them. But in this connection he is also not to act too mildly, because he is attached to any one, as this would only be one kind of culpable partiality.

But Timothy, as the representative of the Apostle, is also to attend to the installation of the elders. He is in doing this not to make too great haste, i. e. not to fail in making a rigid examination, lest perchance he may be prejudiced in favor of this or of that person, and is to see that the conditions which have been described above for the blameless fulfilment of the office be also present. But if, notwithstanding this, sins have been committed, then he is not to be a partaker in the sins of others, by failing to take the proper disciplinary steps, from a prejudice in favor of the accused.

I TIMOTHY

[V, 23-25]

man, neither be partaker of other men's sins : keep thyself pure. (23) Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. (24) Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment ; and some men also they follow after. (25) In like manner also ¹ there are good works that are evident ; and such as are otherwise cannot be hid.

¹ Gr. *the works that are good are evident.*

But in the exercise of such discipline he is above all things to see to this, that he does not show any weakness. Here it becomes clear that Timothy was inclined 23 to prove the purity of his morals before the congregation, in which intemperance prevailed to a large extent, by drinking only water ; i. e. he abstained from all other drinks. The Apostle warns him against this false kind of asceticism, by which Timothy would only injure his health, as this on account of his weak stomach and his frequent sicknesses, called for a moderate use of wine. The sins of some men are indeed so manifest, that these 24 need not first be shown forth by a trial ; but these, as it were, run ahead of the trial in order to challenge the judgment against themselves. But others know how to hide them so skilfully, that they are discovered only later, and in this way, as it were, follow those who commit them. Why the Apostle speaks of these cases, which are also not to be ignored in the disciplinary measures against the presbyters, only becomes clear from the contrast. For in the same way the good works, 25 as a rule, are made manifest ; but those, too, in whose case the opposite is by way of exception the fact, can in the long run not hide their good works. For this reason it is not necessary for Timothy to furnish the proof of the purity of his moral life by total abstinence, because his temperance, even without this, would not remain hidden.

That which he has said concerning the honor due to

VI Let as many as are ¹servants under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed. (2) And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but let them serve them the rather, because they that ²partake of the benefit are believing and beloved. These things teach and exhort.

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

² Or, *lay hold of*.

the widows and to the elders leads the Apostle to bring to a conclusion what he has to say concerning the private pastoral care of the different classes of members
 1 in the congregations. For it is true of all those who feel that they as slaves are under a yoke because they have non-Christian masters, that they are to render these all honor as their divinely ordained house-lords. It was such a natural thing that the Christian, conscious of his high prerogatives, should feel himself above his heathen master, under whose yoke he was compelled to serve; and that this could only lead to the abuse of the name of the God of the Christians on the part of the heathen. God was charged by them with enticing His followers to violate natural duties. They therefore condemned the Christian doctrine as one that
 2 led to moral corruption. But, on the other hand, it was natural, that those who had believing masters, through the consciousness of their fraternal equality, would be easily led to deny these their proper honor. The very unity of faith with them should be a motive to the slaves to render their services all the more zealously. But the fact that their masters as Christians, on all occasions, and hence too over against the slaves, were eager to do good, certainly should move the latter to a grateful love toward them. That which is said concerning slaves is finally and especially included in what Timothy is to teach and to exhort the members of his congregation to accept with their whole heart.

(3) If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to ¹sound words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; (4) he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but ²doting about ques-

¹ Gr. *healthful*.

² Gr. *sick*.

The Apostle returns to the leading subject which in the beginning of this letter he had impressed upon Timothy, namely, the false doctrines current in Ephesus. He does not speak of those who antagonize the ³true doctrine or promulgate false teachings, but of those who teach strange things, which have nothing to do with sound teachings that treat of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine which alone true godliness loves and practises. They are, as it were, blinded by pride, ⁴because they consider the new things that they teach as an especially high wisdom, although as a matter of fact they understand nothing, because they are not even able to distinguish the sound from the unsound, the truly pious from that which is of no religious value. But, rather they are infected with the disease of watching out for all occasions of useless contention, and for the battle of words that arises from such investigations, in which the purpose is not to learn the truth, but only to see who can defend his position in the shrewdest manner. They all envy the one who comes forth as the victor, or they dispute as to who the victor is. Then they abuse him whom they could not overcome by argument; and toward the other they entertain the evil suspicion, that his purpose is not to demonstrate the matter but to put to shame his adversary or to crush him. In the end, in such contentions the chief matters are the contentions of men who are shaken in their reason as the natural organ for that which is divine, because they are no longer able to distinguish what is valuable from a religious point of

tionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, (5) wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain. (6) But godliness with contentment is great

view from what is worthless. On account of their occupations with the latter, they have lost all ability for the attainment of the knowledge of the truth, and have thereby been deprived of the truth itself, so that they have no reason at all to wrangle about their superior
5 knowledge. In conclusion, the Apostle makes the severest of his accusations against them. We do not know whether they sought through these teachings also to secure the support of the congregation as this was given to those who preached the gospel and to the teaching elders, or whether they wished to secure in some other way material advantage from the adherents of the new wisdom. This much, however, is certain,—they in that way made use of the godliness which they claimed to be serving by their teaching, for material ends. Hence it becomes perfectly clear, why their wrangling and disputing produced such bad fruit, as the Apostle has described above. For in the end it amounted to this, that these false teachers tried to show themselves the better teachers of the new mysteries, while they secured to themselves the material advantages which all sought to attain by such teaching. For this reason the Apostle discusses at such length these
6 fundamental motives of their activity. It is certain, he says, that godliness is a great source of gain, but only for altogether different things than those people are seeking for; because godliness is never genuine unless it be joined with contentment, and cannot belong to those who are constantly desiring for more than has been given them of earthly possessions. For the fact that

gain : (7) for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out ; (8) but having food and covering ¹ we shall be therewith content. (9) But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. (10) For the love of money is a root of all ² kinds of

¹ Or, *in these we shall have enough.*

² Gr. *evils.*

we at our birth brought nothing into this world is 7
based upon the fact that we cannot take anything
with us again when we die, i. e., such earthly posses-
sions have no value in regard to the last and highest end
of man, which is found in the next life. For this rea-
son godliness can be a source of gain only for those
goods which have a value in their relation to the next
life, and will appear as such only to those who look
upon earthly possessions in their comparatively small
and fleeting value. From this point of view, we should 8
be content if we have enough to support our life and
cover our nakedness, and should strive only for those
good things which godliness actually acquires. Those
who do not do this, but desire to become rich, shall
thereby be brought to destruction. For the striving 9
after riches leads them into temptation to gain these in
an unrighteous way ; and they cannot resist the allure-
ments of this temptation, because it catches them in a
net through their desires for the satisfaction of their
greed. These desires, in that their satisfaction produces
the opposite of what they had hoped for, are contrary
to reason ; and are harmful, in that they cast us into
the depth of destruction and condemnation. For the 10
love for money is a root of every possible evil, since all
kinds of sins are produced thereby. This has already
been the experience of many, for whom riches had be-
come an object of desire, because they thought that
only thereby they could acquire for themselves the
necessary means for satisfying their earthly needs. In

evil : which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

(11) But thou, O man of God, flee these things ; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, ¹patience, meek-

¹ Or, *steadfastness*.

this desire they have wandered away from the faith and have become engaged with those strange things which furnished them the opportunity for an activity in the interests of gain. But they have gained nothing, and have been pierced through by qualms of their conscience, because they could not crush out the sense of the sinful character of their deeds. Accordingly then the doctrinal aberrations of that time also belong to the evil things that the love of money had produced. It was only a step from the high-flying pride of those new teachers in their speculations to those mean motives, and for this reason the Apostle discusses at such length the contrast between their greed of gain and the fundamental character of all true godliness.

Not in order to urge upon Timothy, as he did in the opening of the letter, to prohibit the agitation carried on by these false teachers, has the Apostle here returned to this subject. As is already seen by the full discussion of the fundamental practical motives of these aberrations, he shows to Timothy in the final admonitions, by way of contrast, what is befitting a

11 Christian. For he does not paint the picture of a true teacher, but the picture of a man who belongs to God and serves Him in all things, as should every Christian who has been consecrated to Him in baptism. For this reason it is not only these doctrinal aberrations which Timothy is to flee, and for which Paul could not presuppose that he evinced the slightest inclination, but rather the impure fountain from which they sprang, and all the evil things that they produced. If

ness. (12) Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. (13) I charge

these people abuse godliness and make it a source of gain, he is rather to search after righteousness, i. e. the state of being pleasing to God, which can indeed be gained only through godliness, which he is to strive to secure first. If those people, through their love of money, have wandered away from the simple faith, he is to race after faith, which does not produce a desire for one's own gain, but brings forth love. If they permitted themselves through their contentions of words to be led into passionate wranglings, he is to seek after patience, which does not permit itself to be embittered toward those who do us an injury, but to adhere to gentle meekness over against them. For 12 this reason the Apostle holds up before his pupil the mission of a Christian life, which does not consist in struggling for earthly goods and for honor in the sight of men, but for the goal of the consummation of redemption, as the athletes strive for the crown of victory. This noble fight he can only fight in faith, because only faith is sure of that goal, and because only in this faith he reaches out for eternal life, as the athlete does for the crown of victory. This goal is sure for the believer, because he has been called to it when faith was worked in him through the gospel. This faith called him to baptism, and he in baptism, before many witnesses, made the excellent confession which acknowledges Jesus as the Mediator of redemption, who has earned salvation for him, and will bring him to this goal. He would be compelled to be ashamed before these witnesses if he would not now do everything to attain this goal. To do this, the Apostle 13 again solemnly enjoins upon Timothy, before the face

thee in the sight of God, who ¹giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; (14) that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: (15) which in ²its own times he shall show, who is

¹ Or, *preserveth all things alive.*

² Or, *his.*

of God, who creates all life, and accordingly, too, that eternal, blessed life, to which he is called, and also before the face of Jesus Christ, who was the first to make this excellent confession before Pontius Pilate. For when He in the presence of the proconsul confessed His Messianic mission, He thereby gave testimony that this baptismal confession to Him as his only Saviour, 14 was, without a doubt, a true one. For this reason the Apostle directs his pupil to fulfil this command, and to deport himself as a man of God, and to fight the fight of faith for the final goal, in such a manner that thereby he may appear to everybody who might seek to criticise him, as unspotted and beyond reproach. In this fulfilment he is to adhere until finally our Lord Jesus Christ, who is now hidden in His heavenly life, will visibly appear at His return. For then the decision will be rendered whether he has attained this consummation of redemption or not. When this return is to take place we do not know. The Apostle had long since learned that this return was not to take place at 15 once, as the older Christianity had expected. But at the time suitable for His purposes, God will permit us to see this consummation, which he, at the conclusion of his letter, again glorifies with a laudation that was current in the congregation, but now in a fuller and richer form. He is the One all-sufficient unto Himself, who has no need of the consummation of our redemption, in order to make complete His glory or blessedness; the only Ruler who can determine when its time has come. He is the King of kings, the Lord of all

the blessed and only Potentate, the King of ¹kings, and Lord of ²lords; (16) who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen.

(17) Charge them that are rich in this present ³world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; (18) that they do good, that they be rich in

¹ Gr. *them that reign as kings.* ² Gr. *them that rule as lords.* ³ Or, *age.*

rulers, as He is already called in Ps. cxxxvi. 3. He is 16 the One who alone has immortality, such as man was to attain, but which he lost through sin, and is to gain only in the resurrection at the goal of his salvation. God dwells in a light unapproachable by the human eye, because the latter cannot endure the brilliancy of this light, and hence cannot behold the Deity. To Him alone, accordingly, shall the honor be and the power, which then shall be revealed in His eternal kingdom.

The Apostle here adds in an appendix the thoughts that had crowded themselves upon him in his discussion of the dangers connected with the desire for becoming rich, also in reference to those who had already secured riches, the mention of which at that place would have badly interrupted the course of his ideas. Timothy is to 17 direct those who in the present world age have thus become rich, not to exalt themselves above others. Pride on account of wealth shows an overvaluation of riches, as though we placed our hope on these, whereas, on the contrary, riches are characterized by uncertainty, i. e. we can never know how long we may count upon possessing them. Our hope should be centered on God, who gives us abundantly everything that we need, but are not to become proud on account of His gifts, but are to enjoy them. Only now the positive command 18 follows showing for what purposes the rich man is to

good works, that they be ready to distribute,¹ willing to communicate; (19) laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is *life* indeed.

(20) O Timothy, guard ² that which is committed unto *thee*, turning away from the profane babblings and opposi-

¹ Or, ready to sympathize.

² Gr. the deposit.

- use his wealth, namely, in doing good, in order to become rich in good works. Thereby works of charity alone are by no means meant, since many other good things can be achieved through wealth. Naturally, however, he who is inclined to be liberal and to give to others, and regards the interests of others as his own, can only secure the means for doing good through
- 19 wealth. Thereby such a person naturally does not give up his possessions; he only resigns the momentary use of them and garners them up for the future, when he certainly will have his use of them, as he who reaches out for an object which is set on a height, must have a good foundation for his feet to rest upon; in this way wealth makes it easier to attain to the goal of the consummation of salvation. For if we make use of money by doing good in the service of love, this does not prevent but strengthens the development of the fulfilment of our Christian duty, upon which in the end the attainment of true life alone depends, i. e. of eternal life in contrast to the earthly, which is at best only imperfect.
- 20 After having resumed the exhortation, which refers to the treatment of each other, he adds a concluding word, which is directed to Timothy personally, and is made all the more impressive because he is personally named. The mission that has been entrusted to him, and which he is to preserve, i. e. is to keep permanently, refers to all that has been commanded him in this letter, but especially to that which has been enjoined concerning doctrinal perversions, concerning which the Apostle

tions of the knowledge which is falsely so called; (21) which some professing have¹ erred concerning the faith.

Grace be with you.

¹ Gr. *missed the mark*.

had spoken at the beginning and at the close of his Epistle. Here again it becomes clear that these were not actual heresies, which he would have been compelled to combat; but he is not to have anything to do with them, not even to refute them, but to avoid them altogether. For they are only profane things, i. e. devoid of all religious significance, and indeed without real contents at all, but mere babbling, and hence only assertions, of which the one constantly antagonizes the other, without any truth in them. Of these false doctrines one is just as much right or wrong as the other, so that the contentions concerning them would never cease. For this reason indeed this knowledge, of which they are so proud, is falsely so called, and has no connections with true knowledge, the contents of which can be only harmonious and above all doubt. It is 21 true, that many make a profession of it, i. e. seek to be considered as especially proficient in this knowledge. But this knowledge has only led them to failure, as far as faith is concerned, in attaining the goal. For faith according to its essence is confidence in redemption; and the occupation with these strange things, the knowledge of which they seek to discover, has led them either to this, that they do not at all any longer seek for the basis of redemption, or that they search for it at the entirely wrong place. The blessing, which is given in its simplest form, as in Col. iv. 18, is directed to the whole congregation, because the Apostle presupposes that Timothy will read to the congregation all the contents of this letter which are not of a purely personal character, and accordingly also will read this salutation.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY

I Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, (2) to Timothy, my beloved child : Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

(3) I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in

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- 1** In this epistle also the reference to his official position indicates, why Paul is writing, not to his spiritual son in the manner of a father, but in an official way to his assistant in Apostolic service. He must do this because through the divine will he has become an Apostle of Christ Jesus, according to a promise, which God has given, and for the proclamation of which somebody had to be sent forth. This was the promise of a life such as is guaranteed to us in Christ. The fact that the mission of his life was to serve in realizing this promise of life gives to the Apostle his joy in addressing this official document to his beloved son, whom he greets with the exact salutation found in 1 Tim. i. 2.
- 3** The Apostle emphasizes the fact that the gratitude which he feels toward God, when he remembers his favorite pupil, is the natural consequence of a devotion to God, which had begun already in his own ancestors and which he has maintained in a pure conscience, which acquits him of any sinister motive. Only from such a devotion to God can the gratitude arise for what God has done of the same kind to his spiritual son. He is filled with this gratitude because his remembrance of Timothy, which is shown in his prayers, is unceasing

II TIMOTHY

[I, 4-5

my supplications, night and day (4) longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with ¹ joy; (5) having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother

¹ Or, joy in being reminded.

night and day. For he can never pray for him without adding his thanksgiving for all that God has already done for him. The remembrance of him is then 4 naturally at all times accompanied with an earnest longing to see him again, because in this remembrance he recalls the tears which Timothy shed at the departure of the Apostle; and the remembrance of his intense love necessarily revives in the Apostle the love which finds its expression in his longing for him. For this longing has the purpose, when he sees him again, of being once more filled with joy. This joy, indeed, is 5 not to be merely a joy at the reunion with the beloved son, but springs from the consideration, that in his association with him, the impression of his unfeigned faith is to be recalled to his memory with new force. The faith which God has worked in him accordingly is what fills the Apostle at all times in his prayers for him with renewed thanksgiving to Him, whom he himself serves with a pure conscience. As he has already inherited such a reverence for God from his ancestors, thus too the unfeigned faith of Timothy is also one that was not won in a struggle with his nearest relatives, but is a priceless inheritance from his mother and his grandmother. For this faith first, i. e. before it was produced in Timothy, had dwelt in them. For this reason the Apostle is firmly convinced, that it is also dwelling in him, and that when he sees him again, he will receive a vivid impression of this unfeigned faith of his, which Timothy does not merely claim to possess, but actually has.

Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also. (6) For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou ¹ stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands. (7) For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power

¹ Gr. *stir into flame*.

The Apostle indeed at present fails to find that 6 this faith is proving itself in him. But because he is firmly convinced that it is present in him, his exhortation to a new zeal in the proclamation of the Gospel need consist only in reminding him of something that he already well knows, and which he only seems to have forgotten. The purpose is that he would enkindle again the gift of grace that has been given to him for this end, and which he has not been making use of in the discouragement that has overtaken him, and which accordingly, like a fire, the flame of which is no longer being fed, has dwindled away; and that he is to make energetic use of this gift. For that this gift is in him admits of no doubt. And the Apostle who at the time of his ordination had together with the entire presbytery laid his hands upon him, in order to petition for the descent of this gift upon him, has the first right to remind him of the duty of making use of it. But this he 7 can confidently do, because the spirit which God has given to all Christians, and therefore to Timothy also, enables him to fulfil this duty. For this spirit is not the spirit of timidity and discouragement, which had for a time hindered Timothy from working for the Gospel, but the spirit of power, such as is needed in order to overcome this weakness. But He is at the same time a spirit of love, which incites us without taking into consideration the dangers that threaten us, to be active in the service of the brethren; and is the spirit of self-control, which for the sake of personal improvement does not give way to the attacks of the

II TIMOTHY

[I, 8-9

and love and ¹discipline. (8) Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the ²gospel according to the power of God; (9) who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace,

¹ Gr. *sobering*.

² Gr. *good tidings*: and so elsewhere. See marginal note on Mt. 4. 23.

natural fear of suffering. For this reason the Apostle can demand of Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony concerning our Lord and concerning himself, the prisoner. From this it is clear what has been discouraging him to such an extent, that he had lost all joy in taking a stand for the gospel. Paul, who after a captivity of four years, had again been freed, was again made a prisoner and was lying in Rome in chains and fetters. It seemed as though the Lord had deserted the testimony concerning Himself, which, if it was to preserve its credit before the world, He ought to protect over against His enemies; and that He had left His servants helpless in all their distresses. It seemed as if the Christians had to be ashamed of this before the world, that the Lord did not use His power for the Gospel and for His messengers.

But Timothy with the Apostle must joyfully bears all sufferings for the sake of the gospel, but indeed not in his own power, which was not sufficient for this purpose, but according to the measure of the strength of God which the Spirit that is given us imparts. God, who is the Founder of our salvation, by having made all arrangements necessary for our salvation in Christ, gives everything that they need to those whom He has called by name holy, i. e. one which proceeds from Him, and which is accordingly an inviolable call, in order that, by proving their faith in suffering, they may attain to the consummation of redemption. For they were not our deeds, on account of which He gave to us the gracious

which was given us in Christ Jesus ¹ before times eternal, (10) but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and ²immortality to light through the ³gospel, (11) whereunto I was appointed a ⁴preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher.

¹ Or, *long ages ago*.

² Gr. *incorruption*. See Rom. 2. 7.

³ Gr. *good tidings*: and so elsewhere. See marginal note on Mt. 4. 23.

⁴ Gr. *herald*.

workings of the call, producing faith in us, but it was His own counsel in accordance with His election. But this is based on grace, which He has given us in Christ Jesus, i. e. at His election to be the Mediator of redemption already before all the ages, and accordingly, in His pre-mundane counsel of redemption, and which accordingly completely does away with all human actions as
 10 a ground of salvation. This grace which had been hidden for so long a time has, however, now been revealed through the historical appearance of Christ, in whom, as a matter of fact, our redemption has been realized. For He is our Redeemer, since through His atoning death He has abolished the power of death, which can no longer harm those who are redeemed. But the complete manifestation of the divine grace was only attained by this, that through the Gospel He has brought to light a life which destined us to immortality, and in His resurrection has assured us of our resurrection. Now we know that the grace of God will bring us to this final consummation of redemption and accordingly will give us everything that we need, in order
 11 to approve ourselves in faith. But of this message of redemption Paul has himself become the personal surety, since he has been called to be the herald and the Apostle of this Gospel. But he has also been appointed as a teacher of this message, but not any more than Timothy himself has, who yet was not a herald and an Apostle, and whom he nevertheless has exhorted to suffer with him for the gospel's sake. This fact he emphasizes be-

(12) For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard ¹that which I have com-

¹ Or, *that which he had committed unto me.* Gr. *my deposit.*

cause he now intends to point to himself as an example for Timothy.

The Apostle now sets forth as an example himself and another, who has already accomplished that to which he desires to exhort Timothy. As far as he is con- 12
cerned, since he has been called to be an Apostle, he gladly suffers that which his calling brings with it, namely his captivity. But it is not this that he wishes to say. He wishes to declare that he is not ashamed of his bonds, just as he has admonished Timothy that he should not be ashamed of his captivity, as though this were a sign that the Lord has deserted His own cause and in this way exposed it to His enemies; because the Apostle knows who it is that has given him faith, when He at his call gave the Apostle the assurance, that the gospel was concerned with His cause, and He would carry it out successfully. On this point he knows, that God's word cannot lie. And because he is convinced that God will also carry out what He purposes to do, Paul cannot then fear, that He will ever desert the cause of the Gospel. True, it does not depend on the person who preaches, but upon the matter preached. Not on the fact that the Apostle is to be protected against the sufferings which his calling naturally brings with it, but on the fact, that God guards the proclamation that has been entrusted to him, by protecting the messenger against giving up his work because through fear of suffering. But this very thing is to his advantage, since on that day, i. e. on the day of judgment, everything will depend on his having fulfilled his calling faithfully. If Timothy, with the Apostle, and

mitted unto him against that day. (13) Hold the pattern of ¹sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. (14) ²That good thing which was committed unto *thee* guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.

(15) This thou knowest, that all that are in Asia turned

¹ Gr. *healthful*.

² Gr. *The good deposit*.

like the Apostle, is to take upon himself joyfully and with a willingness to suffer, the proclamation of the gospel and to become certain of the divine protection, then it is important above everything, that he teach nothing but that which the Apostle teaches. Paul has declared that he has been called to be the teacher
 13 of the gospel such as Timothy is. But this can only be true in the case of the latter if he regards the teachings which he has heard from the Apostle at all times as typical models of sound doctrine such as he is to teach. As a matter of course Timothy must also believe what he preaches and must have that love that is rooted in the communion of life with Christ for those to whom he is preaching. But in this case the Apostle, according to his own example, can demand of him to preserve in faith and in love the great commission that
 14 has been entrusted to him, by fulfilling this duty at all times and not failing to do so because of the fear of suffering. The Apostle has indeed said above, that it is not he but God who fulfils this obligation. God makes His Apostle capable of fulfilling the same. And Timothy, is not to fulfil it through his own power, but through the Spirit who dwells in all Christians. This Spirit, and in Him God Himself, will give him the strength for this purpose.

But Paul can point Timothy to another example. The purpose is only to set the matter in the true light, when the Apostle reminds his pupil of the fact well known to him, namely, that all other Asiatics, whom he

II TIMOTHY

[I, 16-18

away from me ; of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. (16)
The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus : for he
oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain ; (17) but,
when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently, and found me
(18) (the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in

asked to come to Rome in order to aid in his defense,
and two of whom he mentions to Timothy by name,
evidently out of fear of being involved in the trial, had
turned away from him and refused his request. All
the more warmly Paul thinks of one, concerning whom
he can report the opposite. Onesiphorus himself had 16
probably died in the meanwhile, and the Apostle accord-
ingly could only pray that the mercy of the Lord be
shown to his house, which is to comfort all the mem-
bers of the family in the heavy sorrow on account of
his loss, in order to express his own gratitude for what
Onesiphorus had once done to him. He has often re-
freshed him by gifts of love when he was bowed down
through his imprisonment, and he was not ashamed of
his chains, and in this way has become an example to
Timothy. Onesiphorus did not belong to those whom
the Apostle had asked to come to Rome. But rather, 17
when he on one occasion came to Rome and learned
that the Apostle was a prisoner there, he was so little
ashamed of his bonds that he diligently sought him out
in order to refresh him in his imprisonment, and did
not rest until he found him. Paul then evidently did
not in this second captivity enjoy the privilege of hav-
ing his own house, in which he was only guarded while
in chains (Acts xxviii. 30 ; Phil. i. 13) ; and it was yet
unknown to the Christians in Rome just in which
prison he was incarcerated. Onesiphorus, also, who had
shown him such mercy, will on that great day in the 18
judgment of God seek to obtain that mercy which we

that day) ; and in how many things he ministered at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

II Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2) And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

all need ; but Christ, to whom, according to His own word, that service is rendered which is rendered to this Apostle by visiting him while in prison, will then bring it about that this seeking will be crowned with a glorious finding. But what kind of a man he was whom the Apostle is setting up before Timothy as a model, the latter knows better than the Apostle himself, for he was an eyewitness of the great services which Onesiphorus rendered in Ephesus after Paul had left that city.

- 1 From him, whom he had held up to his pupil as a model, the Apostle again turns to Timothy, in order to charge him with a commission which lies nearest to his heart as his spiritual father, namely, to provide assistants in the conflict of faith which has been imposed upon him. In the first place, indeed, he is not able to fulfil the duty that had been enjoined upon him in the preceding, unless he grows strong in his inner life, and through the newly acquired strength overcomes all timidity. But this he can only do through the grace that has appeared in Christ, who is at all times ready to bestow such strength, if it be received in faith. Only if he himself has been strengthened with new courage, can he also induce others to be strong, to which end the
- 2 Apostle now intends to admonish him. He reminds him of the fact, that what Timothy has heard from him had at all times been confirmed by many witnesses, based on the redemptive facts which they felt in their lives, and on their experimental knowledge of re-

II TIMOTHY

[II, 3-4]

(3) ¹ Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (4) No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who enrolled him

¹ Or, *Take thy part in suffering hardships, as, &c.*

demption. The purpose here is to draw his attention to the great significance of having that which he proclaims yet confirmed by other preachers. For this reason he enjoins upon Timothy to entrust the doctrines which he has received to reliable persons, just as these teachings had been entrusted to him. The doctrinal vagaries of the time naturally suggested to the Apostle to secure the preservation and the propagation of sound doctrine by the special commission given to suitable persons to teach. So long, indeed, as Timothy himself still continued in his office, these men could only act as witnesses of the truth as he had proclaimed it. But he himself also in this way gained fellow-soldiers. For he himself is not in any way thereby to be relieved of the duty of contending for the truth against the enemies of the gospel. Such a course naturally brought 3 suffering for the gospel with it, but he is to suffer with them, as is befitting a good soldier of Christ. But fighting for Him and for His cause becomes easier if he has those at his side who contend with him for the same truth. In figurative terms, such as remind us of the parables of Christ, the Apostle shows what is given with the call that Timothy shares with the others. The first sentence is connected with the image of the 4 soldier, which he has just used. Nobody who engages in military service involves himself in things which hinder him in his real calling, especially not in business which purposes to secure the support of the body, and accordingly in callings of any kind that seek to gain profit. Only in this way can he please the general of the army who has engaged him, because this shows

as a soldier. (5) And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully. (6) The husbandman that laboreth must be the first to partake of the fruits. (7) Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things. (8) Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my

that he is exclusively devoted to his military service. In the same way the warrior of Christ dare not be distracted from the exercise of the calling of his life by the cares for earthly prosperity. The second sentence sets by the side of the first picture that of an athlete.

- 5 It is not enough for the latter merely to take part in a contest, as he secures the prize of victory, the crown, only when he engages in the struggle in accordance with all of the rules of the contest. In this way the Christian, too, dare not show the sufferings, which according to the will of Christ, have been dealt out to him, if he would in the end be rewarded. Finally, the Apostle refers to the husbandman, who, if he work hard, has also the first right of enjoying the fruit which results from such labor. We are naturally
- 6 inclined from this law of nature to draw conclusions of an agreeable nature for ourselves. But applied to a laborer in the service of Christ, this means that the more zealously he labors, all the sooner will he be permitted to taste of the sufferings that are caused by the foes of the gospel. For this reason the Apostle also adds (which is, indeed, true of all three parables) the injunction to understand fully what he is saying.
- 7 This is only possible because Christ has given to Timothy the ability for the understanding of all things, even of this most difficult parable, which is ordinarily applied in another way.

In contrast to these heavy demands the Apostle now

8 describes the blessing and the reward of faithfulness.

II TIMOTHY

[II, 9-10]

¹ gospel : (9) wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor ; but the word of God is not bound. (10) Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

¹ See marginal note on ch. 1. 8.

Timothy is to remember the two fundamental facts, which no doubt from the beginning had been summarized in this brief way as a proof of the faith in Jesus as the Mediator of redemption. The first fact is His resurrection from the dead, which secured for Him His heavenly exaltation after His apparent defeat in death. This fact guarantees a resurrection to His servants also, should the sufferings of the latter for Christ's sake lead to death. The second fact is the descent of Jesus from the seed of David, which from the outset placed before Him the prospect of a final elevation to the royal power, from which position He can and will give to His servants a final deliverance from their enemies. Both facts Paul has already proclaimed in Rom. i, 3, 4. In this preaching the suffering comes upon him which has already advanced to the stage of imprisonment in chains, which he carries as though he were a transgressor. He especially emphasizes this fact, because Timothy had begun to be ashamed of him because he was in fetters, since it seemed, as though God had deserted him and intended henceforth to ignore his proclamation. But because this is God's word, which is intended for the world, it is not dependent on the fate of him who proclaims it. The word of God is not bound, as he is, but it continues its work without restraint. The certainty of this encourages the Apostle to endure all things patiently in order to keep as far as in him lies those who have been chosen by God for the perfection of redemption, and by his patience to encourage them to a like patience.

(11) Faithful is the ¹saying : For if we died with him, we shall also live with him : (12) if we endure, we shall also reign with him : if we shall deny him, he also will deny us : (13) if we are faithless, he abideth faithful ; for he cannot deny himself.

¹ Or, *saying ; for it, &c.*

This indeed could not be successfully done, if the word of God did not continue its work notwithstanding the fact that he was in fetters, in order to produce and to preserve this same patience in them. But in this way they too can, as they are bound and are to attain to redemption, as this is established in Christ Jesus, namely though His death of deliverance. This redemption can be shared by them only if they continue in suffering as the Apostle himself does. With the deliverance from eternal destruction there is found connected for them also the participation in the eternal glory, which is intended for the elect ; for which reason no sacrifice is too great for him in order to bring them to this blessed goal. The Apostle returns to the word concerning the

11 royal station of Him who has risen from the dead. The certainty of this is based on the words of an old Christian

12 hymn, which declares : " If we have also died with Him the death of martyrs then we will also live with Him. If we continue in suffering, then we will also take part in His royal glory." For in the future we shall be able to live only with the risen Lord, and can reign only with the Son of David, who has attained to the throne of heaven. But over against this Paul sets up the saying of Matt. x. 33. For he expressly appeals to the fact, that if we are unfaithful and permit our-

13 selves through fear of suffering to be led away from confessing Him, He nevertheless will remain faithful to His promises and to His threats. Not to fulfil these would be a denial of His nature, which consists in faithfulness ; and such a thing would be impossible. It was

II TIMOTHY

[II, 14-16]

(14) Of these things put them in remembrance, charging *them* in the sight of ¹ the Lord, that they strive not about words, to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear. (15) Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, ² handling aright the word of truth. (16) But shun profane babblings : for they

¹ Many ancient authorities read *God*. ² Or, *holding a straight course in the word of truth*. Or, *rightly dividing the word of truth*.

accordingly threateningly announced by the Lord, that one who denied his faith would not be recognized by Him as His disciple at the last.

Timothy is to remind the newly gained assistants of 14 what the Apostle has said concerning the willingness to suffer on the part of the warrior of Christ. He must do this by impressing on their hearts the warning against the doctrinal errors of his days. He is to testify to them solemnly before the face of Christ, that they should not engage in word battles with these people who teach these errors, for they did no good, but only confuse the hearers, who in the end do not know whether Christianity is concerned about the truth of redemption, as had been preached to them in the past, or with idle controversial questions, concerning which they dispute with such people. Timothy is merely to be zealous in giving them a good example by showing himself fully approved before God, as the future Judge. He is a workman in His service and is not to be ashamed of the simple proclamation of the gospel in the presence of those who are boasting of this new wisdom. He is simply to adhere to this according to the right doctrinal standard, which is given in the gospel. It is not therefore permitted to wrangle with others, as to whether the vaporings of their imagination have any foundation in truth or not. He is to have nothing to do with their profane and empty talk. He is 16 to have no dealings with them. For those who put their

will proceed further in ungodliness, (17) and their word will¹ eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; (18) men who concerning the truth have² erred, saying that³ the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. (19) Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, ⁴The Lord knoweth them that are his: and,

¹ Or, *spread*. ² Gr. *missed the mark*. 1 Tim. 1. 6.

³ Some ancient authorities read *a resurrection*. ⁴ Num. xvi. 5?

- time to these things will, if they are permitted to do so dispute with others only in order to be driven to still more godless allegations. Their talk, like a cankerous growth, constantly finds new nourishment, since to oppose them causes them to spin out still other and newer hypotheses and to take a more decided stand against the truth. The Apostle refers Timothy to two men who are well known to him, one of whom, when Paul refuted him, according to 1 Tim. i. 26, went so far in his opposition, that the Apostle was compelled to deliver him over to Satan. They have missed the mark in reference to the truth in so far as they maintained that the resurrection had already taken place in the spiritual regeneration of grace. Thereby they have only perverted and overthrown the faith of many who now no longer believe in the resurrection of the body. It is true that there need be no fear, that the entire congregation, which as such is the bearer and the guardian of the truth, will thereby be enticed away from the faith, since the foundation of the congregation, which God has established, is firm and cannot be overthrown. This true body of the congregation consists of the elect, upon whom God, for the purpose of guaranteeing their steadfastness, as it were, has impressed the seal and inscription of Num. xvi. 5. For these, whom God recognizes as His own, He will also preserve the truth in faith. But they also bear a second mark, which implies that all who call God their God, must keep away

II TIMOTHY

[II, 20-23]

¹ Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness. (20) Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor. (21) If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work. (22) But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call

¹ Is. xxvi. 18?

from all unrighteousness, and from all impiety, which leads to the destruction of faith and to the loss of the truth. The fact that not all the members of the congregation are numbered among the elect, had been proved by these doctrinal aberrations in the case both of those who deceived and of those who were deceived. But the Apostle quiets his Timothy on this account by adding, that in a large household, such as the con- 20
gregation is, there are many and different kinds of vessels, as far as their materials and uses are concerned. There are ornamental vessels of gold and of silver, but there are also those of wood and of clay. The genuine members of the congregation can be 21
recognized by the fact, that they, obedient to the command of that second seal-inscription, separate themselves from the false members by being purified from all uncleanness which may cling to them. Whoever does this becomes a vessel of ornament consecrated to God. Such a vessel can be used for the master of the house, prepared for every good work. Only such persons will be the proper helpers of Timothy in the service of the congregation, fighting as fellow-soldiers for Christ and His gospel.

The Apostle proceeds to discuss more fully the correct handling of the doctrinal errors of the day. 22
First it is necessary to flee the lusts of youth; for immature Christians, who still believe that they can

on the Lord out of a pure heart. (23) But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes. (24) And the Lord's 'servant must not strive, but be gentle

¹ Gr. *bondservant*.

- attain to great success, hope through their zeal and debates to bring the erring and deceived members into the right way again and to make them true members of the congregation. But first of all it is our business to enter ourselves upon the pursuit after righteousness; and for the Christian all normal conduct is comprised under faith and love, as also in the harmony with those who call upon the Lord Christ with a pure heart. The genuine members of the congregation accordingly are those who keep themselves clean from all pollution. He who makes this his highest aim cannot seek to attain it by contention and debate with those who are not yet such members or have ceased to be such. He
- 23 must insist upon having nothing to do with the investigation of such useless problems, upon which youthful immaturity is only too willing to enter. Such investigations are foolish, because they claim to be deep wisdom, and yet lack all contents of truthfulness and come from uncultured people, who have not yet learned, that it is empty arrogance to claim to fathom such things, which in the nature of things are unfathomable. Timothy certainly knows, that such things only produce bitterness, because in such disputes opinion is merely opposed to opinion, and the more passionately these are defended the more ignorant men become concerning
- 24 them. But a servant of God is to have nothing to do with such passionate wranglings, but is to speak in a friendly way to everybody, hence also to those who have become entangled in these doctrinal aberrations, and have thus been deceived. He is to possess ready ability to teach others, for which patient gentleness is

II TIMOTHY

[III, 1-2

towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, (25) in meekness ¹ correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, (26) and they may ² recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been ³ taken captive ⁴ by him unto his will.

III But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. (2) For men shall be lovers of self, lovers

¹ Or, *instructing*.

² Gr. *return to soberness*.

³ Gr. *taken alive*.

⁴ Or, *by him unto the will of God*. Comp. 2 Cor. 10. 5. Gr. *by him unto the will of him*. In the Greek the two pronouns are different.

above all things necessary; such a temper does not permit a man to become involved in contention and wranglings, even if he is provoked by the way in which he is attacked. He is to correct, rebuking with meek- 25 ness, in order to bring about an improvement in those who prove themselves averse to all friendly admonitions and are not willing to receive instruction. He is to wait patiently, to see whether God will perchance in the end give them a change of heart, which will lead them to the knowledge of the truth. For it is es- 26 pecially the new wisdom that has intoxicated them, so that they do not see how they are caught by the Devil in his snare. But in the end every sinful tendency may possibly lead to this. God will perchance make them sober, so that they will learn who it is that has entrapped them, and they will disentangle themselves in order to turn again to the will of God, when by a change in the heart they come to know Him.

Finally, the Apostle describes the great danger of these doctrinal vagaries, which will come to light especially in the future. For the Apostle foresees that 1 in the last days of the present age of the world hard and scarcely endurable times are impending, in which the general degeneration of moral life will force its way into Christianity also. What Paul describes are not the heathen sins of the pre-Christian age; but a deep degeneration of Christian morality. This will originate 2

of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, (4) traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God ; (5) holding a form of godliness, but having

- in self-love, joined to the love of money. The passion for boasting and haughtiness is connected with the abusive slandering of others ; disobedience to parents with ingratitude towards benefactors, and with impiety, 3 which considers nothing as sacred. Joined to the lack of natural love, which suppresses the instinct of kinship, is found unfaithfulness, which either makes no covenant or fails to keep the covenant which has been made. All tittle-tattling is of a slanderous nature, even though it be not false. Again, intemperance, which gives free rein to every lust, is associated with unsociability, which also in the presence of others exercises no self-restraint, and upon this follows an entirely general designation of a state of mind which lacks all love for what is good. In this list Paul never follows a premeditated plan, and is often guided merely by the sound of the words, as is the case in the next two words. The similarity of sound between the two, however, cannot be reproduced in modern language.
- 4 Among the disciples too there had been a traitor and also one who had in foolish boldness exposed himself to danger and come to a fall. He who is puffed up is indeed beclouded in his mind. Pride and every other evil passion beclouds him, so that he does not see where his ways will end. The list closes with a beautiful play
- 5 on words, which can only be partially reproduced. That notwithstanding the strong expressions, which he intentionally employs, the Apostle is thinking of a corruption in Christianity, is clear from the fact, that

denied the power thereof : from these also turn away. (6) For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly

he mentions as the last characteristic of the false Christians, whose coming in the future he sees, that they in their external form of life represent godliness, yet, though they still retain the forms of a Christian life, they deny the effective power of godliness in their deeds, which plainly shows that their so-called godliness has no influence on their moral life. As Paul thinks that the last days are near at hand, and that Timothy will surely yet live to see them, he admonishes his pupil to withdraw entirely from such pretended Christians, and not even to try to recall them, as this in the case of their evident hypocrisy can no longer be expected.

In support of this allegation he appeals to certain events of the time. No doubt he is thinking of those new fashioned teachers, who claim to be in the service of godliness and yet by the way in which they are gaining adherents simply betray the fact that they are far removed from this. He describes, how by all kinds of arts they seek to gain an entrance into other men's houses, which certainly can be only in the interests of material gain ; and how they there chase after the women, who by their nature are more susceptible to religious excitement and are not cautious in judgment. Not without irony does he describe those who are led away as easy booty by these arts. He calls them weak and easily deceived women, who, more than loaded down with sin, are seeking in religious influences quiet and comfort for their oppressive consciousness of transgression. But, because they are still at all times under the supremacy of their many lusts, which they do by no means intend to discard, they are very susceptible to such pretendedly pious speculations, which have no influence

women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, (7) ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (8) And even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth; men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. (9) But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be evident unto all men as

- 7 upon life, and which accordingly permit them to continue in their sins. From this it follows, that such women are always learning and are always asking for new religious excitement, and yet they never come to a real knowledge of the truth, because this truth demands first of all a change of heart, for which they do not have the slightest inclination. The Apostle compares these teachers, the adherents of whom he is describing in this way, to the Egyptian sorcerers, who withstood Moses (Ex. vii. sqq. 11,) and thereby the truth also. The names
8 of these still survived in Jewish tradition. These teachers are chiefly concerned with the wish of gaining adherents for *their* teachings, and accordingly they do not desire that people should turn to the truth of redemption proclaimed by Timothy and those like him. For this reason Christians must keep themselves entirely separate from these people. All attempts, also, to bring them upon a better way by corrections are useless, since these actions show, that their faculty of understanding what is divine has been corrupted and that they accordingly are not in a condition to receive the truth. A person concerning whom it has been settled, that he is not of approved faith, is no fit object of attempted reformation.
9 It is vain to look for a basis for faith in him. Nor is this necessary. For the success of these people will never be great, because the foolishness of their doings will soon become perfectly clear to all, as the Apostle has shown in his description of their failure in the past. Those opponents of Moses, for instance, did not succeed

II TIMOTHY

[III, 10-11]

theirs also came to be. (10) But thou didst follow my teachings, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, ¹patience, (11) persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: and out

¹ Or, *steadfastness*.

in their folly. But this is true only of the time, when in the Christian congregation there still exists a clear consciousness of the worthlessness of all that does not show itself in life and conduct. That things will be different in that future which he sees is approaching is clear from what he has said above and also underlies what is said in the following exhortation.

The admonition to withdraw entirely from this pretended godliness the Apostle supports by a reference to the earlier life of Timothy. He has not followed such teachers as those who, according to his description, will 10 appear in the future. He has followed the Apostle, and not only in his teachings, as though these had no influence on his life, as the doctrine of these corrupt teachers had upon their life, but he had followed Paul's whole manner of life. As the Apostle modestly adds, he had followed the purposes that underlay his manner of life, in those cases in which he had not yet succeeded in carrying these out as he wished. This manner of life, which Timothy decided to follow, was not only characterized by faith, by constancy in love, and by patience, which certainly had been abundantly exhibited by him, but 11 also had endured the persecution and sufferings, such as the Apostle experienced in the very time Timothy became his companion, in the cities where he worked during his first missionary journey. Of course, he could not take such a life as a model unless he saw at the same time, that Paul also had firmly borne all his persecutions, and that the Lord had delivered him out of each of them. But this he knew, that such things did

III, 12-15] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

of them all the Lord delivered me. (12) Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (13) But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (14) But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of ¹whom thou hast learned them ; (15) and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is

¹ Gr, *what persons.*

- 12 not befall the Apostles alone in the work of their calling, but that all who would live a godly life in Christ must
- 13 endure such persecution ; and yet he retained his determination to become a Christian. But wicked persons, like those whom the Apostle sees coming in the corrupters of morals in the future, and deceivers, such as were those teachers, who knew how to convince their pupils that their entirely foreign doctrine is the truth, are going in a way that leads to destruction, whether they be the deceivers or the deceived. In order not to go
- 14 astray in the same path, it is only necessary for Timothy to remain in that which he has learned, and concerning which he has received full certainty. But to do this he must be moved already by his natural pious feelings toward his bodily and spiritual parents, since he certainly knows from whom he has learned these things. He has
- 15 not only received oral instruction, but he has from childhood been acquainted with holy writings that were given in the Old Testament, and this was for him as high an authority as it had been for his teachers and his parents. These writings present the truth before his eyes with unextinguishable clearness. It is true that these writings cannot make wise, i. e. direct him upon the right way, which leads away from eternal destruction to salvation, unless they are understood and applied through a confidence in redemption based on Christ. For they might also be understood in the sense in which righteous Jews

II TIMOTHY

[IV, 1-2

in Christ Jesus. (16) ¹ Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for ² instruction which is in righteousness: (17) that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

IV ³ I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: (2) preach the word; be

¹ Or, *Every scripture is inspired of God and profitable.*

² Or, *discipline.*

³ Or, *I testify in the sight . . . dead, both of his appearing, &c.*

interpreted them, or be made matter for unfruitful 16 speculations. But under the former condition every such writing is useful for instruction, because it has come into existence from the fact that God has breathed upon its author with His Spirit. Then it is profitable for rebuking and converting everything that is contrary to the will of God, and for leading these back to the right condition of life as well as for educating 17 them in righteousness. Only in this way can a man of God, such as Timothy desires to be, become a perfect one and entirely prepared for every good work.

Now follows a solemn and final admonition, which is 1 connected with the thoughts in the beginning of the Epistle. God and Christ, who will judge the living and the dead, including Paul himself, if he shall die in the meanwhile without having done everything for the purpose of admonishing Timothy concerning his duties, are appealed to as witnesses, that he has testified, that Christ will at His return appear as the Judge, in order to establish His kingdom. Hence Timothy is to examine himself, whether he be able to stand before Him and to take part in this kingdom. But this will depend on his having obeyed the admonition which is now to follow. He is to proclaim the 2 word of the gospel, and in doing so must not take into consideration whether it comes in a time convenient to the hearers or not. He is to convict those who are on

urgent in season, out of season ; ¹reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. (3) For the time will come when they will not endure the ²sound ³doctrine ; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts ; (4) and will turn away their ears from the

¹ Or, *bring to the proof*.

² Gr. *healthful*.

³ Or, *teaching*.

the wrong way ; he is to chide those who are convicted and to admonish them with all longsuffering, even if he despair of gaining the people's attention. With all kinds of instruction must he who has been admonished be assured of the necessity of what is demanded of him. He is to do all this, even though this admonition does not suit the hearers. The Apostle bases this prediction of the people's heedlessness on the cor-
 3 ruption of morals which shall force its way in as he has described above. Then indeed people will find sound doctrine unbearable, because it rebukes the sins which they are not willing to give up. In harmony with these sinful lusts, they will seek other teachers for themselves who will not rebuke sin. Not without irony the Apostle adds that they will constantly pile them one upon the other, although there is not such an abundance of true teachers. But they will be chiefly anxious constantly to hear something new, in order that their ears may be tickled by sensational things, which present something entirely novel. Then will
 4 they turn their ears away from the truth, which indeed cannot satisfy this desire for the sensational. On the other hand, they will turn to the fables of these new teachers, concerning which Paul has already spoken in the beginning of his first letter. These will be eagerly sought after in those times of moral decay, because they claim that they can satisfy the religious needs of the age, without demanding that the lusts be overcome. But Timothy is to preserve his clearness of mind and

II TIMOTHY

[IV, 5-8

truth, and turn aside unto fables. (5) But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. (6) For I am already being ¹ offered, and the time of my departure is come. (7) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith : (8) henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day ; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

¹ Gr. poured out as drink-offering.

his prudence, and not permit himself to be confused by such tendencies of the times, in reference to the difference between sound doctrine and such diseased notions, even in these cases where this difference does not lie on the surface.

In concluding the exhortation the writer recurs to the beginning of the letter. He is, without dreading persecutions, to do the work of an Evangelist that has been enjoined upon him and fully to render the service demanded of him. Until now Paul has done this work and has preached the gospel ; now Timothy is to take his place. For he is already at the point of completing 6 the sacrifice of his life by shedding his blood as a martyr, as a drink-offering is poured out for this purpose. The time, when he is to start out from this life, is al- 7 ready at hand. The noble contest, which he has all his life been carrying on in the service of the gospel for the crown of victory, has been finished, and his running in the race-course has reached an end. It is plain that he has preserved the faith, which no hostility could compel him to deny. As for the rest this is certain, 8 that the crown of victory, with which righteousness, i. e. the normal relation which for him consisted in adhering to the faith, is crowned, has already been prepared for him and he cannot fail to secure it. For Christ, because He is a just Judge, will crown his

(9) Give diligence to come shortly unto me : (10) for Demas forsook me, having loved this present ¹world, and went to Thessalonica ; Crescens to ²Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

¹ Or, *age*.

² Or, *Gaul*.

righteousness on that day, as just retribution demands. Certainly He will not crown him alone, but all who have learned to love His appearing, and in whom no consciousness of unfaithfulness can connect this love with fear at the approach of the coming Judge. To those who shall receive the crown Timothy also shall belong, if he follows the admonition of the Apostle. Nothing can confirm him more in this than the hopeful joy, with which the Apostle looks back upon his life's work, as this also will eventually assist him too in attaining this object. With the solemn testimony of the appearance of Christ, this final admonition began ; with this it also concludes. This admonition was the testament of the Apostle to his spiritual son, in case that he would never see him again. At any rate, he never expected to see His appearing in this life, the certainty of which, however, Timothy, is to cling too, and in view of this he is to follow this admonition.

Evidently the invitation to Rome was the ostensible occasion of this letter. Timothy is to exert himself to
 9 come to him soon, since otherwise he will possibly find the Apostle no longer alive. It was accordingly necessary to put aside all obstacles and to take the first opportunity of sailing for Rome. The Apostle states his
 10 reasons for his urgent request. Three friends, who, as Timothy must have surmised as present with the Apostle, had since left him or they had journeyed on farther ; and concerning Demas he must unfortunately say, that he no longer belongs to those who love the future appearing of Christ. He has learned to love the present world, and has for this reason deserted

II TIMOTHY

[IV, 11-15]

(11) Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering. (12) But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus. (13) The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments. (14) Alexander the coppersmith ¹did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works: (15) of whom do thou also beware; for he greatly withstood

¹ Gr. *showed*.

the Apostle, evidently in the fear of being involved in his fate. As Luke alone is with him, Paul is longing 11 for his favorite pupil. He is to bring Mark with him, not for the purpose of giving the Apostle company but because he has a work for him, which he is the right man to do. But he can without hesitancy take Mark 12 to Rome with him, although he would naturally have been the representative to supply the place of Timothy in Ephesus, if the latter went to Rome. But Paul had already sent Tychicus to Ephesus, so that the congregation, which was yet surrounded by many dangers, would not lack a head. The cloak, also, which Paul 13 had left with Carpus in Troas, and which, on account of his captivity, that had taken place in the meanwhile, he had not been able to get, Timothy, when he comes, is to bring with him. The cloak he is to bring if Timothy travels by way of Troas, or he is to send to that place for the garment. The books also which he had left there, especially the parchment rolls, must he bring with him. His fatherly friend thinks of one other hindrance that may prevent his journey. A certain 14 smith, named Alexander, upon whom Paul according to 1 Tim. i. 20, was compelled to inflict the severest disciplinary punishment, and had never forgiven him for this, has shown him the greatest hostility. Of this he does not intend to speak further. The Lord will repay him according to his works, and the Apostle will not judge him. But he feels impelled to warn his friend 15

IV, 16-17] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

our words. (16) At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their accounts. (17) But the Lord stood by me, and ¹strengthened me; that through me the ²message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the

¹ Or, gave me power.

² Or, proclamation.

Timothy against this man, as the latter is now again in Ephesus, and could easily try to prevent him from making his journey to Rome, so that Timothy could not appear in Rome as a witness for Paul. For when Alexander was in Rome, he most violently contradicted, evidently before the court, the statements which Paul made in the name of all the Christians.

- This remembrance of the first hearing in his trial, at which he was called upon to defend himself and the cause of Christianity, leads the Apostle to recall the fact, that he was on that occasion entirely alone, because this fact must urge Timothy to hasten his journey, so as to come to the Apostle's assistance for the second
- 16 trial. On that occasion nobody came to his assistance. All those upon whose support before the court he could count, had forsaken him. If at that time Luke or any one of the friends mentioned above had already been with him, this would show how easily the fear of confessing friendship for a prisoner, or the fear of man, could cause the withdrawal of near friends in the critical moment. Paul can only wish that this unfaithfulness be not counted against them, because they had only sinned out of weakness and not from wickedness as did that
- 17 Alexander. For he did not lack higher assistance. Christ stood by him, strengthening him, i. e. giving him courage and joy in his defense. In this way it happened that he could bring to full completion the message that had been entrusted to him, by testifying to the gospel before the highest tribunal of the world. That gospel all nations were compelled to hear, be this in the sense

II TIMOTHY

[IV, 18-20]

Gentiles might hear : and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. (18) The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom : to whom be the glory ¹ for ever and ever. Amen.

(19) Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus.

(20) Erastus remained at Corinth : but Trophimus I left at

¹ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

that in the mixed audience that generally surrounded such a tribunal he saw all nations represented, or that this defense of his was soon spread over all the world. But still clearer the assistance of the Lord was seen in the fact, that nobody but He could bring it about that this first trial did not end in his condemnation, and that he for the present yet escaped the danger of death, as from the jaws of a lion. The same Lord will also deliver him in the future from all evil, which his enemies would inflict upon him, even if only in this way that his death as a martyr will help him to a deliverance from eternal destruction, and will transfer him from the earthly kingdom of Christ, in which he is yet at all times subject to the hatred of his enemies and to the weakness of his own flesh, into His heavenly kingdom. With the usual doxology (cf. Gal. i. 5), which is here addressed to the heavenly Lord, the letter closes.

In the postscriptum, Paul first sends greetings to 19 that couple with whom he at first had lived in Corinth, and with whom he had engaged in his trade. They had gone with him to Ephesus, and had remained there (cf. Acts xviii. 2, 3 ; 18, 19) ; with these he includes the family of Onesiphorus, of whom he spoke above. Only to two men he does not send his greetings, although these, as they were probably both Ephesians, would expect a greeting, as did Timothy also. He does 20 not know whether they are in Ephesus. Both had probably accompanied him when he left Ephesus for the last time. Erastus went as far as Corinth, and had intended

IV, 21-22] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

Miletus sick. (21) Give diligence to come before winter. Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

(22) The Lord be with thy spirit. Grace be with you.

- to return from there, but had remained in Corinth. Trophimus, who probably wished to accompany him further, he was compelled to leave behind, sick, in Miletus. He cannot presuppose of both that they are in Ephesus, and gives the reasons for this to Timothy, in case the one or both had in the meanwhile returned home. He again adds the injunction that Timothy is
- 21 to hasten his journey, so as to reach him before the winter season begins, since, if this is not done, the end of the sailing season will make it doubtful whether he can make the journey at all. Then come greetings from the Roman congregation, with which Timothy was doubtlessly well acquainted, as he had been in Rome with Paul during his first captivity of two years. But all the others also join in with this greeting. On account of the purely personal character of this letter Paul cannot wish that Timothy should read it to the congregation, as he had done with the first letter (cf. vi. 21).
- 22 For this reason he concludes the letter with the blessing that he wishes to Timothy alone, namely, that Christ will assist him in his spiritual life (cf. Gal. vi. 18), as we have already seen how much he needed this strengthening from the Lord. The Apostle then utters a prayer that the grace of God will accompany the entire congregation. This salutation, as it was addressed to the congregation, Timothy no doubt read to them.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

I Paul, a ¹servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ,
according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of

¹ Gr. *bondservant*.

This letter like the preceding Epistles to Timothy is of an entirely official character. It contains almost throughout only official directions addressed to the congregation, among whom Titus is working, and, as is indicated by the greeting at the close, is for this reason to be read to these congregations, as was the case with the first Epistle to Timothy (cf. vi. 21). But Titus was in Crete; and Paul, on his journey through the island had merely become superficially acquainted with these congregations. For this reason the Apostle here speaks more fully of his official position than he does in the letters to Timothy; so that the congregations, to whom he desires this letter read, may know who it is that gives such directions to Titus. He calls himself the ¹servant of God, whom He has called to this service. But God has done this, by commanding Christ to send him forth as His Apostle; for as an Apostle of Christ he is entirely in the service of God. This official position is in perfect agreement with the purposes of God to work faith in His elect, in order thereby to call them to become members of the congregation. Only because, as we will see, there were similar doctrinal vagaries flourishing in Crete such as were found in Ephesus, which threatened to transfer their knowledge from the *one* truth of redemption to absolutely foreign things, the Apostle draws attention to the fact, that his

the truth which is according to godliness, (2) in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised ¹ before times eternal; (3) but in ² his own seasons manifested his word in the ³ message, wherewith I was intrusted according to the

¹ Or, *long ages ago*.

² Or, *its*.

³ Or, *proclamation*.

- Apostolic mission had also the purpose of bringing about a knowledge of the truth. He expressly describes this knowledge as that which corresponds to godliness, i. e. such as the pious seek and appropriate,
- 2 since that which at that time was given out as truth was of no value for godliness. But his Apostolic mission rests further upon a hope of eternal life; for only in order that those in the congregations may attain to this hope, faith and knowledge of the truth are to be worked through him in the elect. But that his Apostolic mission in this respect, too, stands in the service of God, the Apostle explains by the fact, that it was none other than God, who also cannot lie, who already, many ages ago, promised eternal life in the Old Testament, whereby the hope for such a life has become absolutely trustworthy. But if this hope is to become a motive power in the elect, then it was not only necessary that the eternal life which constitutes the object of this hope must have been promised many ages ago, but it was also necessary that a new proclamation should follow, which made it certain, that this life was actually in existence and how it was to be obtained.
- 3 This has now taken place; and for this reason the Apostle inserts parenthetically, that God has made known this word, which showed the way to reach this already present goal of redemption; and God did this at the proper time, since only when Christ came and achieved this redemption, the way to it could also be made known. But He has revealed this way not only to a few, to whom His word was directed, as, for

TITUS

[I, 4-5]

commandment of God our Saviour ; (4) to Titus, my true child after a common faith : Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.

(5) For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in

example, to the prophets of the Old Testament, but rather in a message, which was intended, with the proclamation of a herald, to sound throughout the world. And with this message he, as an Apostle, has been entrusted, in accordance with a commission from God, who in Christ has made all the arrangements for our salvation, and who now also desires that this is to be made known to all the world. But from this point of view, too, his Apostolic office has the same purpose of serving God. And this service it is in which he is now writing to Titus. He accordingly then addresses himself 4 to the latter, who in their common faith, in a higher than the bodily sense, is recognized as his genuine spiritual son. True, he cannot speak to him as a father does to his child, but he must write to him, what God directs him to write in His service. But he begins with the blessing with which he is accustomed to open his letters. However, he does not do this in the form which he adopted in his letters to Timothy, but in the form used in the other congregational letters. When he calls Christ, from whom, as also from God the Father, grace and redemption comes, not, as he usually does, our Lord, but our Redeemer, he thereby intends to indicate, that God has become our Saviour by this very fact, that He has made Christ to be such.

Paul, when after a short stay he was compelled to 5 leave Crete, had left Titus there, in order to arrange what he had himself not been able fully to adjust. Among these things was the appointment of elders, who were to be elected in every city, because this

every city, as I gave thee charge; (6) if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. (7) For the ¹bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry,

¹ Or, *overseer*.

demanded a lengthy examination of those who were to be chosen. Paul at his departure had already directed him to do this. But he was compelled now, as we will see, when he was at the point of being called away, to remind him of the fact, that he had not yet done the chief thing for which he had been left there. However
6 the Apostle must also remind him that in this selection of elders, he is not to look only at the gifts and the inclinations that must be regarded as self-evident prerequisites, but also at certain conditions, without which the elder, notwithstanding his zeal and his tact, could not possess the confidence of the congregation so necessary for this office. We know these conditions already from the first Epistle to Timothy. The elder is in every respect to be above criticism; is not to give offense by a second marriage; and, if he has children, these must not still be unconverted, a possibility which in the long established congregation at Ephesus, was not at all taken into consideration. On the other hand, as was pointed out in the other letters too, they dare not be disobedient and must not be charged with leading a
7 wicked life. The Apostle bases this on the fact, that a man to whom the office of oversight was entrusted in a congregation, shall above everything be unblamable in his personal and family life, as is befitting one who in the name of God is to manage His house, i. e. the congregation. He is not to be arrogant, not easily aroused to anger, not a drinker or a brawler, not one who on account of his greed for money will not hesitate to resort to unlawful means, but rather hospitable and a

¹ no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; (8) but given to hospitality, a lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; (9) holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the ²sound ³doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.

(10) For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and de-

¹ Or, not quarrelsome over wine.

² Gr. *healthful*.

³ Or, *teaching*.

lover of all good things. He is to be prudent, so that 8 he constantly keeps himself under restraint, righteous in the most comprehensive sense in the eyes of God, so that a religious consecration characterizes his activity, and he must be capable of every self-denial. We have already seen in the Epistles to Timothy, that the Apostle considered it urgently necessary over against the doctrinal aberrations of the times to connect the work of teaching with the congregational office. For this reason he here demands also, that the elder is 9 to engage diligently in the proclamation of the word, naturally in such a proclamation which would be in harmony with what he had learned, and hence in its contents would be worthy of credence. Through diligent exercise in this work the elder, even if at first he is not particularly apt for this, will receive the power on the basis of sound doctrine to admonish, and, what was of special importance at that time, to convict those who rebelled against his authority, convicting them of the wrong they were doing.

With this the Apostle begins to discuss the doctrinal errors which were just as bad in Crete as they were in Ephesus. For this reason he desired a stricter guidance of the congregation, through appointment of elders and their participation in the work of teaching there. For there were many in Crete who rebelled 10 against those who proclaimed the truth. The Apostle explains as the reason for this, that they are in general rebellious and easily permit themselves to be deceived

ceivers, specially they of the circumcision, (11) whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. (12) One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said,

Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle ¹gluttons.

¹ Gr. *bellies*.

in their judgments by the empty talk of others, by considering things of no value as most important. This is new, that there were many such rebellious babblers especially among the Jewish Christians in Crete; as it was already stated of the Jews in Rom. ii. 19-20; x. 21, that they were fond of acting as the teachers of
 11 others and were inclined to disputations. These empty babblers are once for all to be forced to silence, by directing them to keep still without entering upon their refutation. The Apostle explains this, by describing them as those who by their empty talk misled whole families, and as it were, turn them topsy-turvy, by winning for themselves some member of the family, especially the easily deceived women and children, and exciting these against the husbands and the parents. There are indeed things which must be taught, even if the harmony of the family is thereby endangered (cf. e. g. Luke xii. 51, sqq.); but these people teach nothing but unnecessary things, in order thereby to secure material benefits for themselves. We accordingly hear at this place also, that they used the instruction in religious matters, not for the purpose of improving and teaching others, but for filthy lucre's sake. The Apostle proves that unfortunately there were many such people in Crete from the national
 12 character of the Cretans. One of themselves, who certainly must be acquainted with his fellow-countrymen and who was among them considered as a prophet, had described them in exactly the same way in a state-

(13) This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be ¹ sound in the faith, (14) not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn

¹ Gr. *healthy*.

ment which was at that time on everybody's lips. He has in mind Epimenides of Crete, who calls all Cretans liars, which Paul interprets as referring to their fraudulent deeds; and wild beasts, whose immoral brutality does not hesitate to destroy the holiest family bonds; and lazy bellies, which at all times are determined to secure an idle life of ease. Paul confirms this testimony from his own experience as truthful, and upon this he **13** bases his admonition to Titus.

Since they are such in their national character, it is perfectly useless to quarrel with them about their babbling. He is promptly to convict them of their wrong, which consists in an unhealthy tendency in their religious life. But this tendency consists in their deceiving themselves and others in reference to the religious value of certain things which have no connection at all **14** with faith. Instead of directing their attention to the truths of redemption, they devote themselves to Jewish fables and human ordinances. Now we also understand why it was the Jewish Christians who in Crete, to a large extent, were guilty of these doctrinal vagaries. These fables were naturally based on the Old Testament; but they were not the divine commandments in that Testament, but only the ordinances of men, who turned themselves away from the truth, i. e. those who remained unbelievers, be these Gentiles or Jews. True, it was especially characteristic of the latter to seek godliness particularly in external ordinances, such as those which distinguished sharply between what was clean and what was unclean, and demanded absolute abstinence from the latter. Over against this the

away from the truth. (15) To the pure all things are pure : but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure ; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. (16) They profess that they know God ; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

- 15 Apostle sets up the proposition, that for those who are really, i. e. inwardly, clean, all things are clean, because not that which is only unclean outwardly can defile them in the eyes of God. For those unclean, who are polluted by guilt, and because they remained unbelievers have no means of being cleaned from this guilt, nothing is clean, because everything with which they come into contact is defiled in the eyes of God by their sinful character. It is, accordingly of no good to them carefully to keep away from all that is impure, since they themselves make everything unclean. This uncleanness is indeed not to be found in external things, but in themselves. If their reason, which should learn to know God and His will, has once become defiled by sin, then they will use all things, not after the will of God, but according to their own sinful lusts, and thereby will defile them. And if their conscience has once been polluted by the consciousness of sinful uncleanness, then also a lawful use, according to Rom. xiv. 20, is unclean for them, and makes everything unclean for them. What Paul says in conclusion is especially true of the unbelieving Jews, because they seem to have an advantage over the unbelieving Gentiles, since these human ordinances originated among them ; and yet in
- 16 truth they have no such advantage. They indeed recognized God, whom they pretend to know ; but by their actual conduct they deny this knowledge. They pretend that they have the greatest abhorrence of all heathen doings, and yet are themselves abhorred in the

II But speak thou the things which befit the ¹ sound ² doctrine ; (2) that aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, ³ sound in faith, in love, in ⁴ patience : (3) that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor

¹ Gr. *healthful*.

² Or, *teaching*.

³ Gr. *healthy*.

⁴ Or, *steadfastness*.

eyes of God, because they are disobedient, as are the Gentiles, in spite of their pretended zeal for the commandments of God. If they then are not approved in reference to all good works, then, too, nothing can be learned from their human ordinances in reference to that which is truly pleasing to God.

The Apostle gives Titus special instructions with reference to pastoral work. The manner of his speaking, in contrast to these babblers, who dispute about Jewish fables and the distinction of what is clean and unclean, is to be guided by the principle, that he speaks only what is befitting sound doctrine. But this consists of nothing but the manifestation of their doctrine in the conditions of natural life, which prescribes their special duties to each sex, to every station. In this way the older men are to remain sober, because ¹ this is the chief requirement for a dignified conduct, so befitting old age. But in every respect they are also to show that prudence, which at all times evinces perfect self-control and never forgets itself. As maturity of age should not permit any unsound elements in faith, thus, too, it should not in the exercise of every Christian virtue, such as love and patience. In the same, and indeed in a higher measure, it is to be said of the older women, that they in their general conduct are to act ² in conformity with the dignity of their age, which has something sacred in itself. In this case, of course the natural tendency of the sex to evil gossip, as also to the slavish subjection to the use of wine, must not be found. It is their calling to teach that which is good, ³

enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good ; (4) that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, (5) *to be* soberminded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed : (6) the younger men likewise exhort to be sober-minded : (7) in all things showing thyself an ensample of good works ; in thy

- for which they have ample opportunity in the case of young women. In older congregations, such as that in Ephesus, the necessity of not leaving the admonition of these women to the comparatively youthful assistant of the Apostle, had led to the establishment of an ecclesiastical widows' institute (cf. 1 Tim. 4 v.). In this case Paul regards it as the duty of the older women in general to teach the younger self-control, so that the excitement that was natural for their age and sex, would not hinder them in the fulfilment of their most natural duties, in their love for husband and children, in sobriety and chastity, and in the good management of the household. Finally, the Apostle mentions the duty of subordination to the husbands, because in this the non-Christian judges first of all of the effects of the word of God, and then ridicules this if it seems to disturb the natural moral principles of life.
- 6 Naturally Titus is himself to admonish the young men
- 7 to thoughtfulness in every direction and to self-control. He does not need special directions in this case, because he can himself in his personal life be a model for them in every kind of good works that exist. But in his case, he being a young man like themselves, it is necessary, to show in his activity as a teacher an uncorruptness, which has not in the least been contaminated by the doctrinal aberration of the times, as also a dignity, which, notwithstanding his youth, must never be absent in his official acts, and further a sound

doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, (8) sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us. (9) *Exhort* ¹ servants to be in subjection to their own masters, and to be well-pleasing to *them* in all things; not gainsaying; (10) not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. (11) For the grace of God ² hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, (12) instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodli-

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

² Or, *hath appeared to all men, bringing salvation*.

way of speaking, in which the opponents can find no 8 ground for criticism. Naturally the representatives of the new wisdom are watching carefully, to see if they can find anything wrong in the teachings of Paul and of his pupil, in order to recommend their own doctrine in opposition to theirs. They will be put to shame, if they can find absolutely nothing to say against them. Finally, Titus is to admonish the slaves to subject them- 9 selves in every respect to the masters to whom they belong, even if this is not an easy task. It is necessary to do their duty not only because they must, but in order to gain their masters' good will, and not to pro- 10 voke them by contradiction and to injure them by unfaithfulness, but in every possible way to show them perfect fidelity. For this is the point where the doctrine, in which God, our Saviour, has Himself shown us the way to attain redemption, is protected not only against slanderous talk, but can appear in its creditable character which will put it in the right light, by showing that it not only produces the fulfilment of duty but even more than this.

That sound doctrine demands a faithful performance of duties, such as Titus is to ask, from all ages, sexes and stations, and is honored thereby, Paul proves by a reference to the contents and to the purpose of the 11 gospel. For what is preached in the gospel is the ap- 12

ness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present ¹ world ; (13) looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory ² of the great God and our

¹ Or, *age*.

² Or, *of our great God and Saviour*.

pearance of the grace of God that brings salvation to all men. But this it does by educating us, and thereby bringing us to a change from the old sinful life, which brought destruction upon us, to a new life, which is certain of eternal redemption, and thereby also of deliverance from this destruction. This educational purpose can, first of all, be characterized as a denial of the godlessness that was underlying our entire old life, and of the sinful lusts which spring from the world that is estranged from God, of which lusts henceforth none are again to put in their appearance, just as if they had never existed. On the other hand, we are to lead a life such as is pleasing to God, in that self-control which is always demanded first, and which overcomes all the sinful promptings of our nature ; in that righteousness which conforms to the divine will ; and in that godliness which is the antithesis to the godlessness of our old being. Such a life we can lead in the present world age, in which otherwise life is something so entirely different, because our hearts go out beyond this

18 world. For we are looking for a possession in hope, which, because it is connected with the most perfect blessedness, already makes our hope of it blessed. This possession of hope will, however, be given to us only in and with the appearance of the glory of Christ at His return, because only then can we attain to a participation in this glory. For then Christ will appear as the great God, who, according to His exaltation, can also give us the greatest things which the divine grace that has appeared in Him has prepared, and who, as our Deliverer from eternal destruction, carries out the pur-

Saviour Jesus Christ ; (14) who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.

(15) These things speak and exhort and reprove with all ¹ authority. Let no man despise thee.

III Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good

¹ Gr. *commandment*.

poses of this saving grace. He can do this, because He 14 has already done the utmost in order to make this possible. For He has given Himself unto death in order to free us from the fetters with which sin, because in its nature it is contrary to all the ordinances of God, chains us in all forms in which it appears. Only in this way was it possible for Him to secure for Himself from among the former slaves of sin a people of His own, whom, however, He had, first of all, to cleanse from all the pollution that adhered to them, so that henceforth they could in their service of Him strive after good and well-pleasing work. These are the 15 contents of all sound doctrine, which Titus is to speak ; and the purpose of all his admonitions are those good works, which alone befit this doctrine. For this reason all his exhortations and corrections are to be given in the tone of decisive command. He need not be afraid, that any one will despise him on account of his youth. This is not to be ; for he commands not by his own authority, but by the authority of Him who has sacrificed Himself for this purpose ; by the authority of the divine grace, the appearance of which has had no other purpose than what is proclaimed by the sound doctrine.

Titus, however, is to remind all, whatever their age, 1 sex, or station, of their well-known duty to the non-Christians. This first of all consists in obedience to the ruling powers, and to those who in any way have

work, (2) to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men. (3) For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. (4) But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and

- any governmental authority. Such subordination shows itself in obedience and in willingness to render service. The Apostle presupposes, that the government tries to bring about good works ; and for this they are at all times to be ready, even before they are directly commanded to perform them. For in their dealings
- 2 with all men, and hence also with the non-Christians, they are to be ready for every good work, are to slander no one, to avoid all quarrels by fairness and mildness which makes no arrogant claims, and to show all gentleness in the face of any injustice that they may suffer.
- 3 We, too, were at one time no better than those people in our pre-Christian condition. Our faculty of perceiving the character and will of God had also been darkened, and we were disobedient, so that we ourselves did not do the recognized will of God. In accordance with the former we wandered on the wrong way ; with the latter, we were in subjection to the lusts of all kinds. The result of the whole was a life of wickedness, which studies only to harm the neighbors and of envy, which does not wish them any good. In accordance with such hateful conduct was mutual hatred, the extreme antithesis of a life in love.
- 4 The fact that all this is now changed, is in no way our merit. The Apostle again returns to the appearance of the divine grace and of the friendliness on the part of Christ toward man, which was totally unknown to the heathen world, in which only envy and hatred prevailed. God revealed Himself in this love as our Redeemer ; for it was He who delivered us from the

his love toward man, appeared, (5) not by works *done* in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the ¹washing of regeneration ²and renewing of the Holy Spirit, (6) which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) that, being

¹ Or, *laver*.

² Or, *and through renewing*.

destruction, which had become our lot on account of our sinful life. Certainly not because of any good works, 5 which we had performed in a satisfactory career of life, since our nature was the exact opposite of such works; but solely because of His compassion on our misfortunes into which we had fallen on account of our sinful life. He saved us, however, by calling us to baptism through working faith in us. For this baptism was a bath, such as was necessary, if a complete regeneration was to be wrought in us; or, in plain terms, if our whole life and being was to be renewed. This could take place only through the Holy Ghost, whom He has richly poured out upon us in baptism, in order to bring about such a renewal. Because, in order to work in us the proper 6 state of mind toward all non-Christians our former life, which brought destruction upon us, had been described as a sinful life that was entirely similar to theirs, it is not the forgiveness of sins, but rather the transformation of our entire former life, that is here emphasized as that which saved us in baptism. But the outpouring of the Holy Spirit also, which achieved this transformation, was in no way brought about by us, but solely through Jesus Christ, who in His redemptive death has become our Saviour. The proof of His grace, which He has given us in His death, was intended to secure for us our justification before God, which we had not 7 earned nor could earn for ourselves. Through this justification we were to become His children, and as children also heirs of eternal life, the hope of which Christ had

justified by his grace, we might be made ¹heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (8) Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I desire that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to ²maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men : (9) but shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes,

¹ Or, *heirs, according to hope, of eternal life.*

² Or, *profess honest occupations.*

been awakened in us when we were called. In order that this fruit of the act of grace on the part of our Redeemer may be imparted to us, God has saved us through baptism by having changed us through His Spirit into new beings, such as alone can attain to eternal life.

- 8 This admonition closes with a reference to the doctrinal errors of the times. The Apostle begins with the statement that the word which proclaims salvation, the contents of which he has just expounded, is absolutely trustworthy, and Titus, for this reason, can speak of these things with full confidence. This alone can bring it about that those, who place their confidence on God alone, now also become concerned that they do their good works properly. This peculiar expression is chosen, in order to indicate, that they need not first to produce those good works, since these, according to what he has said above, are worked in them by the Spirit. They accordingly have only to see that they perform the right works at the right place and in the right manner ; and for this purpose his former admonitions had given them directions. But those truths, upon which he bases these admonitions, are valuable in themselves and are useful for mankind, since they make them willing and capable for trust in God and for the zeal that flows out of this for good works. In contrast to this Paul mentions that with which people were so much occupied in the 9 doctrinal vagaries of the times. These were the

and fightings about the law ; for they are unprofitable and vain. (10) A factious man after a first and second admonition ¹ refuse ; (11) knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned.

(12) When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, give diligence to come unto me to Nicopolis : for there I have

¹ Or, *avoid*.

foolish investigations concerning things, of which, naturally, they could not yet know anything, those genealogies, from which, through the so-called allegorical interpretations they spun out all kinds of mysterious knowledge. This was the hopeless struggle as to who had found the correct understanding, and thereby also the correct interpretations of these problems, and finally, the contention concerning the deeper meaning which they thought they had found in the law. Titus is to enter upon no investigation of these things, but is to avoid them altogether, because they are useless and are without any truth. He is simply to rebuke any 10 person, who through his occupation with these matters causes differences in the congregation and in the families, because this is something wrong. If, however, he does not listen to one or two admonitions and quits, then Titus is to refuse all further negotiations with him. For from this it has become certain, that he is no longer 11 willing to be corrected, and that the continuation of his sinful work is done contrary to his better knowledge and conscience, whereby he has pronounced his own sentence. All further negotiations with him would be a useless waste of time and strength.

In the postscript Paul first announces to Titus his 12 approaching recall. Whether he intends to send Artemas or Tychicus, whom he had sent on a similar mission to Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 12), to relieve him in Crete, where the congregations still stood in need of firm leadership, he is not yet able to decide. But when

III, 13-15] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

determined to winter. (13) Set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. (14) And let our *people* also learn to ¹ maintain good works for necessary ² uses, that they be not unfruitful.

(15) All that are with me salute thee. Salute them that love us in faith.

Grace be with you all.

¹ Or, *profess honest occupations.*

² Or, *wants.*

the substitute comes, then Titus is to hasten to the Apostle at Nicopolis, probably the city in Epirus, 18 where he had decided to remain over winter. Then he recommends two traveling missionaries, who are to come by way of Crete, and to bring this letter. The one was a former teacher of the law, named Zenas; the other was Apollos, the well-known friend of the Apostle, mentioned in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Titus is diligently to provide that they are to be sent farther on their journey, for which purpose not only company was necessary, but also perhaps travel- 14 ing funds; for they are to suffer no want. But our people, i. e. the Christians, shall learn from this case how they are in general to do good works in the proper way, i. e. by satisfying the needs and the wants of the Christians who are on a journey. Only in this way will they find the fruit which they seek at the 15 hands of their brethren in the faith. In conclusion, the Apostle sends greetings from those immediately around him. He for his part sends greetings to those who love himself and Titus in the faith. From this company those are excluded who have through the doctrinal aberrations of the times suffered shipwreck in their faith, even if they are personally favorably inclined to the Apostle. The final salutation, on the contrary, is addressed to all members of the congregation.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO

PHILEMON

I Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, ¹our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker, (2) and to Apphia ²our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house : (3) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(4) I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my

¹ Gr. *the brother*.

² Gr. *the sister*.

In this purely private letter addressed to a member of the congregation in Colossæ, Paul does not designate **1** himself by any official title, but solely as an adherent of Christ who is bound in chains. Timothy, too, who joins with him in the salutation in the opening of the letter, is simply called a Christian brother in general. Both of them, however, do not address Philemon merely as one who is heartily beloved, but as a co-worker in the mission cause. Their greeting is at the same time sent to Apphia, as a Christian sister, probably the housewife, who is also concerned with the contents of **2** this letter, and also to Archippus, who was mentioned in Col. iv. 17, and who was probably the leader of the congregation that assembled in the house of this couple, and to this congregation, too, the greeting is sent. As Paul calls him a fellow-soldier, he must already have been engaged in a struggle against the enemies of the gospel. The blessing that Paul here prays for is **3** the same that he usually sends (Rom. i. 7).

This letter also begins with thanksgiving by the Apos- **4** tle to his God, who has given him joy in everything that he has heard concerning Philemon. These thanks at

prayers, (5) hearing of ¹thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints; (6) that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in ²you, unto Christ. (7) For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

¹ Or, *thy love and faith*.

² Many ancient authorities read *us*.

all times found their expression, when he remembers
 5 his friend in his prayers, because he always hears, that Philemon not only faithfully manifests his love for Christ, but also proves such love and faithfulness to-
 6 ward all the members of the Christian congregation. It seems, as though he intended, by giving them a share in this faithfulness of his, to make them experience fully what real Christian virtue is. For if this love and faithfulness toward them flows from that toward Christ, this certainly must bring them to see, that all the good that is in the Christians is not their merit, but comes from Christ; and in this way in the end makes them learn to see in Christ the Mediator of re-
 7 demption also in this respect. But the fact that what he hears concerning Philemon, even apart from the benefit that thereby results to the cause of Christ, produces such constant gratitude to God, the Apostle bases on the circumstance, that he has received great joy and comfort in his oppressed condition through this approved love on the part of Philemon. For the hearts of the congregation had been refreshed by Philemon, and everything which his dear brother, as he here again calls him, has done to them, appears to him as though it had been done to him.

With this the Apostle comes to the real purpose of his letter. Onesimus, whom he has sent to Colossæ in company with Tychicus, the bearer of this letter (Col. iv. 9), was a slave of Philemon, but had run away from him, and had been converted by Paul during his cap-

PHILEMON

[I, 8-12]

(8) Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, (9) yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul ¹the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: (10) I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, ²Onesimus, (11) who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: (12) whom I have sent back to thee in his

¹ Or, an ambassador, and now, &c.

² The Greek word means *helpful*. Comp. ver. 20 marg.

tivity in Cæsarea. The Apostle had directed him to return at once to his master, and now tries through 8 this letter to secure for him a friendly reception at the hands of the latter. The Apostle says emphatically, that he had great boldness because of Christ, who had thereby authorized him to direct Philemon as to what is befitting in the case of the contrite and returning slave. 9 But for the sake of the love of Philemon, which had already caused him so much joy, and the new evidences of which would fill him with new joy, he asks, where he could command. Although he is one who would have a full right to do the latter, he now appeals to this love of his, to which he has a right to appeal, not only on account of his age, but also in his present oppressed condition, both of which would probably move Philemon to cause him joy. He accordingly petitions for 10 his child, whom he has begotten in his bonds, since Onesimus had been converted through his preaching during his captivity. With a playful reference to his 11 name, Onesimus, which suggests the Greek expression for "usefulness," he mentions, that the slave, as his running away shows, had at one time been to him a good-for-nothing, but had now, after his conversion, become to him and to the Apostle a genuine Onesimus. But in sending him back, he has sent Philemon nothing less than his own heart, because he has taken the slave so 12 to his heart, that with him he sends to his friend his

own person, that is, my very heart: (13) whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the ¹ gospel: (14) but without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will. (15) For perhaps he was therefore parted *from thee* for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; (16) no longer as a ² servant, but more than a ² servant,

¹ Gr. *good tidings*. See marginal note on Mt. 4. 23.

² Gr. *bondservant*.

whole heart, which is no more to be separated from him.

- 18 Now follows his petition for Onesimus. Of course, the Apostle would have preferred, if he had followed his own inclinations, to keep Onesimus with him, so that the latter could continue to serve him in the chains into which the proclamation of the gospel had brought him. This would have been to Philemon's good, for thus he could repay what he owed to the Apostle. But without Philemon's expressing his
 14 opinion in the matter, he would do nothing in the matter, lest the good deed that would lie in the fact that the slave had been left to serve him would seem to be
 15 something forced, and not a voluntary act. Possibly it was the purpose of Providence to cause the slave to be absent from the master for a short time, in order that he might regain him eternally; but now, indeed, no longer as a slave, but rather as something more than
 16 this, namely, a beloved brother, whereby only a communion was established with him lasting to all eternity. If he is thus more than all his fellow Christians already to the Apostle, how much more to Philemon, to whom he is such, not only in the natural and human relations of life, but also in the communion of life with the Lord? As the Apostle has also on account of this possible divine purpose sent the slave back, he now comes to the real purpose of his petition. If Philemon, as can be presupposed, has in Paul an associate with

PHILEMON

[I, 17-20]

a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. (17) If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. (18) But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth *thee* aught, put that to mine account; (19) I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. (20) Yea, brother, let me have ¹joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ.

¹ Or *help*. Comp. ver. 10 marg.

whom he is most intimately connected, he is to receive 17
the slave in full love, as though it were himself. Only
one thing further the Apostle desires to mention, as
this might interfere with such a reception. It is possible
that the slave, by having run away from his master,
may have caused him, through this unfaithfulness,
considerable damage, and possibly may have defrauded
him of money which he may yet be owing to him, and
which he cannot repay. This he is to set down to the
account of the Apostle. With a solemnity which, be- 18
cause it is incongruous between friends, is veiled
by sportiveness, he declares that this letter, written by
his own hand, is to be a formal promissory note for
this purpose. It is true that he will not fail to mention,
that if it actually came to a demand for the
payment of this note, Paul will have a counterclaim
to present, because Philemon does not owe him this
or that sum, but himself, since he was converted
by Paul, and accordingly owes the Apostle his salvation
in time and in eternity. Indeed, he must inform 19
his dear brother that he has a right to wish, which he 20
states by again playing on the name Onesimus, that
he himself would be of benefit to him by dropping the
claims to the debt he has assumed for Onesimus, and
in the living communion with Christ comfort his heart,
by relieving himself of all worry on account of this
slave.

(21) Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say.

(22) But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you.

(23) Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; (24) and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

- 21 In the conclusion of the letter, Paul draws attention to the fact, that he had only imposed on Philemon a command he confidently knows would be obeyed. He knows that he will do what is asked of him, and will receive his slave in a friendly way, without punishing him for any wrong that he may have done. Indeed, he knows that Philemon will do more yet than he has directly asked of him. The expression intentionally leaves it undecided whether he is thinking of a full liberation of the slave or of leaving him to serve the Apostle. At all events, Paul has still a petition in reference to himself, concerning which he indeed knows that the expression of it will cause Philemon great
- 22 joy. For he can ask him to prepare a lodging place for him only if he hopes to be liberated in the near future. But we know that this was constantly held out to him by the Proconsul Felix in Cæsarea (cf. Acts xxiv. 20), and we learn from the Epistle to the Colossians what it was that suggested the wish to him of visiting the congregations in Phrygia, with which he was not yet acquainted, and which were surrounded with dangers. He hopes, however, that he will fulfil this request, for which he depends upon their intercession, as well as that of all the Gentile congregations. From the greeting of Epaphras we see, that the latter was now voluntarily
- 23 sharing the captivity of the Apostle, as, according to
- 24 Col. iv. 18, Aristarchus is doing. Here Demas and Luke, who, according to Col. iv., also were with him, are

PHILEMON

[I, 25]

(25) The grace of ¹ our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
² Amen.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *the*.

² Many ancient authorities omit *Amen*.

mentioned as his co-laborers, as in the latter passage 25 Mark and Jesus Justus are, the latter of whom is not mentioned here at all. The final salutation, which reads exactly like that of Phil. iv. 28, as does the blessing in the beginning of the letter, includes the persons mentioned, together with Philemon.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
HEBREWS

I God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, (2) hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in ¹his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the ²worlds; (3) who being the effulgence of his glory, and ³the

¹Gr. *a Son*. ²Gr. *ages*. Comp. 1 Tim. i. 17.

³Or, *the impress of his substance*.

In the opening of the letter, the writer mentions
1 neither himself nor his readers. But he gives us to understand who they both were, by speaking of their common fathers, to whom in olden times God had spoken through the prophets. They accordingly both belong to that nation, for whom in the time of the preparatory revelation God had awakened the prophets, in order to give to them, again and again, doctrine and exhortation, promises and threats, in accordance with their needs, and through the mouths of the prophets. But they are both living in the last times, to which all the predictions of the prophets pointed, and which have begun in their age. To them God has spoken in One who was more than all their prophets, namely, in the Son, who is such in
2 the unique sense, since God has appointed Him heir over all things, i. e. has given to Him the dominion over the whole world. But this only was in harmony with His relation to the world from the beginning. For through Him God has established all the processes of nature, as these processes had in all ages tended toward the goal at which the world was to be sub-
3 jected to Him. It was natural that He alone should

very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; (4) having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more exalted name than they.

attain to this dignity, who from the beginning had been of divine essence. All the glory of God had, as it were, been poured out upon Him as the Son of His love, and for this reason the divine essence has found its perfect expression in Him. The word of omnipotence was His, by means of which He carried all that was intended for His inheritance through all the changes of the world ages, to that goal where He was to enter upon His supremacy over it. This could only take place after He had completed His work upon earth. This latter consisted not only in the deliverance of God's message through Him, but in His atoning death, which brought about a cleansing from the contamination of guilt, by which the sins of the people separated them from their God and made them unworthy for the reception of the promised redemption. Afterward, through His exaltation to the right of the majesty of God, He attained to the complete dominion over the world, which was intended for Him, and through which He became in dignity and in power greater than the highest creatures of God—the angels. But this is only in accordance with the fact that in the Old Testament there was bestowed upon the Messianic Ruler over the world, in a unique way, a name which is entirely different from that which they bear, namely, the name of Son, into the possession of which, by being appointed as Heir over all things, He now has entered for all time.

Now comes in detail the Scripture proof for what

(5) For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

¹ Thou art my Son,

This day have I begotten thee?

and again,

² I will be to him a Father,

And he shall be to me a Son?

(6) ³ And when he again ⁴ bringeth in the firstborn into ⁵ the world he saith, ⁶ And let all the angels of God worship him.

(7) And of the angels he saith,

⁷ Who maketh his angels winds,

And his ministers a flame of fire:

¹ Ps. ii. 7.

² 2 S. vii. 14.

³ Or, *And again, when he bringeth in.*

⁴ Or, *shall have brought in.*

⁵ Gr. *the inhabited earth.*

⁶ Dt. xxxii. 43 Sept.; comp. Ps. xviii. 7.

⁷ Ps. civ. 4.

has been said concerning the greatness of the Mediator of redemption, such as a believer from Israel would have occasion to give to the believer from the same nation, only if their faith was in any way being attacked. This proof begins with what has been said concerning the name of Son. For the angels are in the 5 Old Testament also at times called the Sons of God. But God, who speaks everywhere in the Old Testament, never has said to a single one among the angels what He says in Ps. ii. 7, to the Messiah, addressing Him simply as His Son; or what He says in 2 Sam. vii. 14, 6 of the Descendant of David, in whom all the promises are to be fulfilled. But He is not only exalted over these, as under other circumstances the first-born is over his brethren; but the author interprets the words taken from Deut. xxxii. 43, which are now yet to be found only in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, to mean, that in the end, when God will introduce His first-born at His return for the second time, as He introduced Him for the first time in connection with His public ministry, He will command all the 7 angels to worship Him. But this is confirmed in another places. For while in Ps. civ. 4, God states in reference to the angels what makes them appear as

- (8) but of the Son *he saith*,
^{1 2} Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ;
 And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of ² thy
 kingdom.
- (9) Thou, hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ;
 Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
 With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
- (10) And,
⁴ Thou Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation
 of earth,
 And the heavens are the works of thy hands :
 (11) They shall perish ; but thou continuest :
 And they all shall wax old as doth a garment ;
 (12) And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up,
 As a garment, and they shall be changed :
 But thou art the same,
 And thy years shall not fail.
- (13) But of which of the angels hath he said at any time,
⁵ Sit thou on my right hand,
 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet ?

¹ Ps. xlv. 6 f.

² Or, *Thy throne is God for, &c.*

³ The two oldest Greek manuscripts read *his*.

⁴ Ps. cii. 26 ff.

⁵ Ps. cx. 1.

changeable as are all creatures, because He, in accordance with His services, changes them now into winds and then into flames of fire, the Messiah in Ps. xlv. 7, is directly addressed as God. His throne is eternal, 8 like that of God ; the scepter of His dominion is just, like that of God. Because already during His earthly career He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness, 9 God has anointed Him with the oil of His glory and of salvation and has thereby exalted Him far above all others upon earth who are anointed. The author in Ps. cii. 26 sqq. hears God addressing the Messiah as the 10 Creator of the world, who, even if the heavens pass away and are transformed into a new heaven as an 11 old cast-off garment is exchanged for a new one, will 12 always remain the same. By his very expression he again returns to the beginning of his Scriptural argument, and asks if God ever has called upon any of the 13

(14) Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation ?

II Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from them*. (2) For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward ; (3) how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation ? which having at the first been spoken

14 angels as He does upon the Messiah in Ps. cxi. 1, to share His throne with Him, or if they are not all only serving spirits. And while the Messiah Himself brings about the deliverance of His people, the angels are only sent out for the service of those who are destined to attain this deliverance.

Now it becomes clear why the author emphasizes so strongly the divine greatness of Him who in the Messianic times has spoken to us and which he has demonstrated by his Scriptural proof. Upon this is based the

- 1 unique significance of His redemptive message. For this reason we must, since He is what He is, pay all the more heed to what He has proclaimed, so that we may not, seized by dangerous influences of the times, be hurled past this message without having learned to appreciate its full significance. The author makes this clear to his people by a comparison of this redemptive message with the Old Testament message of the law. The latter, as we have already read in Acts vii. 53, was
- 2 spoken only through the medium of the angels, and yet its threats were so inviolable that every transgression committed in conscious disobedience was punished in
- 3 accordance with the principles of justice. How then are we, who have heard a word of such greater significance, to escape from such a punishment, if we despise the deliverance that is proclaimed to us in this word, which deliverance certainly must have a much greater

through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard;
(4) God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by ¹ gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.

¹ Gr. *distributions*.

significance for us than that which was appointed for the fulfilment of the law or for the atonement sacrifices ordained by the law? This deliverance was first proclaimed by the exalted Lord Himself, who during His days upon earth had promised it and has made it possible through His atoning death; and this word has then, through those who heard His proclamation with their own ears, become as absolutely reliable for us as are the words of the law. The writer, as are those he addresses, is a pupil of those who heard these things with their own ears, i. e. of the original Apostles, and has not received the message of redemption as a direct revelation, as was the case with the Apostle Paul. Indeed, in the case of the original Apostles God has Himself given additional testimony through the signs and wonders, which accompanied their proclamation. For without Him the many miraculous powers, which appeared in the Apostles, could not have been exercised. Moreover, God has Himself according to His will bestowed the measure of the Holy Spirit which produced each one of these signs and miracles. This solemn reference to the confirmation of the redemptive message shows clearly, that the author was writing at a time, when there was danger of doubting this message; and his whole letter is probably to have the purpose of confirming anew the faith in this message.

It can only gradually become clear in the course of the letter, what the circumstances were which were making the people to whom the writer belonged doubtful whether He who had died upon the cross could be

(5) For not unto angels did he subject ¹the world to come, whereof we speak. (6) But one hath somewhere testified, saying,

²What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

(7) Thou madest him ³a little lower than the angels;

Thou crownedst him with glory and honor,

⁴And didst set him over the works of thy hands:

¹ Gr. *the inhabited earth*.

² Ps. viii. 4 ff.

³ Or, *for a little while lower*.

⁴ Many authorities omit. *And didst . . . hands.*

- their Messiah. But evidently it is this taking of offense that has called out the didactic discussion of the writer on the necessity of the sufferings and the death
5 of Jesus, upon which the first part of this letter bases the exhortation to take heed of the message of redemption. This argument proceeds from the statement, that it has not been beings such as the angels are, to whom God has subjected the world of the redemption that was to come, of which this letter is to speak. If this had been the case, then these would have brought about the work of realizing redemption by means of the divine fulness of power, with which they infallibly do His commands in the realm of nature. But in the
6 Scripture a certain person, no matter who this may be, has solemnly affirmed, that the world is subjected to a Son of man who is lowered below the angels, whereby it is already indicated that faith in this matter is not such an easy thing. The sacred singer begins in Ps. viii. 5, with an expression of surprise at this, that God had looked down with such mercy upon a weak child of man in order to exalt Him to be the Messiah. He has accordingly made Him, who, as was shown in the be-
7 ginning of the Epistle, of a necessity was like unto Him in His essence, for the short time of His earthly activity, less in comparison with beings such as the angels are, and has only after that crowned Him with honor and glory (cf. Ps. viii. 6). According to His

(8) Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to him. (9) But we behold him who hath been made ¹a little lower than the angels, *even* Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every *man*. (10) For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, ²in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the

¹ Or, *for a little while lower*.

² Or, *having brought*.

counsel He has subordinated everything to Him (cf. Ps. 8 viii. 7), and in this "everything," since nothing is excluded, the world of the redemptive future must be included also. But for the present this counsel of redemption is not yet completely realized. It is true that Jesus, who for a short time was subordinated to the angels, is now crowned in His exaltation with honor and glory, but this is the case from the very fact of His sufferings and death. Only through these He 9 could become the Mediator of salvation, because only in this way could He taste to the dregs all the bitterness of death, that the sinner might be delivered from tasting them. But He tasted them when forsaken of God (cf. Mark. xv. 34); and when He was hanging upon the cross; and in this way that very thing which makes many doubt the deliverance that has thus been wrought through Him, became the surety of this deliverance. It indeed may seem to many unworthy of God to give up His Messiah to a death of suffering and disgrace. But for the very reason that all things must 10 serve His purposes, and because everything takes place through Him, this death cannot possibly have been brought about through the superior power of His enemies nor have frustrated His purpose. But rather it befitted Him thus to die, because in the redemptive work of His Messiah He was leading many sons to

¹ author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (11) For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, (12) saying,

² I will declare thy name unto my brethren,

In the midst of the ³ congregation will I sing thy praise.

(13) And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, ⁴ Be-

¹ Or, *captain*.

² Ps. xxii. 22.

³ Or, *church*.

⁴ Is. viii. 17. f.

- glory, who on account of their sins were the victims of destruction, in order to perfect through suffering Him who was to show them the way to their redemption and was to lead them there. Of course they could attain the perfection necessary for this only through purgation from the pollution of sin in His sacrificial death, while He attained this through His endurance in the severest trial of suffering. But, as a matter of course, this is founded on the difference between Him who by cleansing them of their sins was to establish the con-
- 11 secration to God of those who were intended for deliverance, and of those, who through Him were to be consecrated to God. On the other hand, they both had to be on an equality in this, that they had descended from the same original ancestors, because only one of the same kind can become a substitute for another. For this reason, He who is so vastly exalted over us, is not
- 12 ashamed to call us His brothers, as He does in Ps. xxii. 23, where the writer hears speaking the Messiah who together with His brethren from the generation of Abraham wants to proclaim the name of God, and to glorify Him in the midst of the congregation. It appears from the selection of proof passages made by the writer, that in this common descent he was thinking not only of the similarity in the nature of the body, but especially too of the fact that they were equal before God.
- 13 For this reason he refers to Is. viii. 17, and viii. 18, in which, according to his interpretation, the Messiah, in His

hold, I and the children whom God hath given me. (14) Since then the children are sharers in ¹ flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he ² might bring to nought him that ³ had the power of death, that is, the devil; (15) and ⁴ might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (16) ⁵ For verily not to angels doth he give help, but

¹ Gr. *blood and flesh*, Eph. 6. 12.

² Or, *may*.

³ Or, *hath*.

⁴ Gr. *For verily not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of, &c.* Comp. Is. 41. 9; Eccius. 4. 11; ch. 8. 9. (in the Gr.).

trust in God and in His willingness to obey, puts Himself entirely side by side with the children of the same descent. From this it becomes clear, why the Mediator of redemption could become perfected through suffering alone. It was necessary for this end that, in contradistinction to children who were united through the 14 relation of blood and by their common participation in one blood, He also, notwithstanding his unique and eternal being, came near to them in His incarnation, and that He, like them should participate in flesh and blood. For only in this way could He shed His blood and die, in order to deprive the Devil of the power which until now he possessed, to deliver over all sinners through death to destruction, because he then could do no harm to those who were thus freed of their sins through the atoning death of Jesus. Thereby, then, those, who are His national kinsmen, are thus 15 delivered also from the fear of death, by which they were being held all their life in servitude, because of course they feared death, since they thereby had fallen into the hands of the Devil and under his power. The reason why the author so strongly emphasizes this result of the death of Jesus, evidently is that the readers were in danger in the persecutions to which they were subjected, of falling from the faith, because of their fear of death, whereas the death of Jesus, at which they constantly took offense, was intended to 16

he giveth help to the seed of Abraham. (17) Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (18) ¹ For ² in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

¹ Or, *For having been himself tempted in that wherein he hath suffered.*
² Or, *wherein.*

free them from this very fear of death. For He certainly has thereby not taken charge of such beings as the angels, who as such are not subject to death, but
 17 of the seed of Abraham, to whom Jesus belongs as do those whom the writer addresses. For this very reason it was necessary for Him to be placed on an equality with His brethren in all things, not only by partaking of the same flesh and blood, but also in the capacity for suffering and in the possibility of being tempted. Only in this way could He who is now exalted to God have kindred feeling with those who were subjected to the same sufferings and the same temptations, in order then as a High Priest at all times faithfully performing the duties in His relation to God, to atone for the sins of the
 18 people, i. e. to atone for them in God's eyes. For only by being tempted by the same sufferings which they experienced can He from His heavenly exaltation assist those who are subject to the same temptations; since He has full sympathy with them, and, as a faithful High Priest, can at all times give them new courage and new joy in that they have been freed from sin. In this way the sufferings of Jesus at which they have taken such offense serve the purpose of enabling them to endure the test of temptation. But it is again and again confirmed anew that both the author and also the readers are the bodily descendants of Abraham, as the letter constantly speaks of what Jesus has done and yet does for their people.

III Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even Jesus*; (2) who was faithful to him that ¹ appointed

¹ Gr. made,

For the first time the author directly addresses his readers in drawing a conclusion from what he has just said concerning the faithful High Priest. That which ¹ gives him the right thus to exhort them is his relation to them as a Christian brother. For they, as associates in a call that has been given them from heaven, are the members of a chosen people, separated together from the world for a heavenly goal; and the fact that they belong to God, which results from this relation, imposes certain duties upon them, to which every brother who has the same call with them can admonish them. The first and most obvious duty is, that they carefully observe Him whom they, as he does, regard as the One sent by God in the absolute sense, who as the Messenger of God for the Messianic era, is infinitely exalted above all former messengers, and is at the same time the ² High Priest. Then they will recognize, that He is faithful, and that the message of redemption which He brought during His stay upon earth is accordingly just as reliable as His highpriestly substitution of them before God makes them sure of the redemption that has been given through Him. For this fidelity in the fulfilment of His mission has been proved by His fidelity to God, who has appointed Him to be an Apostle and High Priest, and whom He can serve only in His house, i. e. in the family of God, to which the author and the readers belong. If now the author compares this fidelity of the Mediator of redemption with that of Moses, it is clear that the fidelity of the latter was something incontestable to the readers, because they believed that the promises connected with the fulfilment of the law

him, as also was Moses in all ¹ his house. (3) For he hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he that ² built the house hath more honor than the house. (4) For every house is ² builded by some one; but he that ² built all things is God. (5) And Moses indeed was faithful in all ² his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken; (6) but Christ as a son, over ¹ his house; whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end.

¹ That is, *God's house*. See Num. 12. 7.

² Or, *established*.

together with its redemptive means were entirely beyond any doubt, whereas the promises of Christ, through the long delay in His return, seemed to become doubtful. In this connection the author reminds them of the fact, that Christ, at His exaltation to the right hand of God, is and has been deemed worthy of an incomparably greater glory than all the glory which Moses in his acknowledged high position possessed, and for this reason, even if Moses was just as faithful as He, we must first of all take into consideration His fidelity.

- 8 But this greater glory to which Christ attained springs from the fact that greater honor is due to the Founder of a house than to the house itself, and hence also to the most prominent members in the house. For if, as is self-evident, the Old Testament family of God has been established by God Himself, this as little makes it impossible that He did this through Him who before His appearance upon earth was the Mediator of redemption in its preparatory history, as the fact that in the end
- 4 God is the author of all things, makes it impossible that
- 5 each house has its own builder. Assuredly Moses, as we read in Num. xii. 7, was faithful in the entire house of God, but only, as he is there described, as a servant, who, as stated in xii. 8, was called to testify to the people that which was to be spoken to him as the representative of the people. But Christ, as His name

- (7) Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith,
¹ To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
 (8) Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation,
 Like as in the day of the trial in the wilderness,

¹ Ps. xciv. 7 ff.

already indicates, is the Son in the absolute sense, who exercises full authority in the house, and has been appointed to be the Messianic ruler over the house of God. This house consists of the readers together with the author; for they both belong to the family of God, which the Messiah has established through His pre-historical activity. Not indeed already because of their bodily descent from the fathers; for this membership is in the future to be based on clinging to the joyful assurance, that the fulfilment of the hopes of Israel is immediately impending, and also on the advantage of which the believer boasts in knowing the Messiah, who has already appeared and in the near future shall return again. Unbelieving Israel in adhering to its old hopes of redemption, has no such confidence and no such glory. But the Apostle emphasizes this merely because the confidence of this hope had been shaken among the readers, whom he desires to strengthen by his reference to the fidelity of Christ.

Because the membership in the family of God is based 7 on the fulfilment of the conditions mentioned above, the author holds up before his readers the warning example of Israel in the wilderness. He starts with a reference to Ps. xciv. 7-8, where the Holy Spirit speaks through the mouth of the Psalmist, and calls upon the readers to-day, when they hear this voice of God, not to harden their hearts, as their fathers once did in the wilderness, in the bitter feeling because God seemingly had deserted them 8 in their needs; and through their murmuring they tempted God, as it were, to see if He would try His will

- (9) ¹ Where your fathers tried *me* by proving *me*,
And saw my works forty years.
(10) Wherefore I was displeased with this generation,
And said, They do always err in their heart :
But they did not know my ways ;
(11) ² As I swore in my wrath,
³ They shall not enter into my rest.
(12) Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of
you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living

¹ Or, *Wherewith*.² Or, *So*³ Gr. *If they shall enter*.

- 9 and His power in punishing them. On that occasion God had said, that because they had for forty years seen the manifestation of His miracles, and notwithstanding, in the error of their hearts, had not learned to know His ways, He had been seized with an aversion to them and
11 had sworn in His wrath, that they should not enter into the rest that had been provided for them in the land of Canaan (cf Ps. xcv. 9 sqq.). This is the word of God which the Holy Spirit to-day still is holding up be-
12 fore the readers, in order to warn them against similar hardening. Because of this word, the author appeals to his brethren, to be on their guard, that among them there be not a single wicked heart full of unbelief. For he who begins to doubt in reference to the hope of the approaching consummation of redemption, no longer believes in the Messiah as the fulfilment of all divine promises. But this is nothing less than a denial of the living God, because they then no longer believe in Him as the One who can and will fulfil His promises through His Messiah. Because the readers think, that if they would give up the faith in the Messiah, which was constantly becoming more and more a matter of doubt to them, they could nevertheless remain faithful to their God according to the teachings of His servant Moses, the author represents the discarding of the Christian faith as a denial of the living God, from which they

God : (13) but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day ; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin : (14) for we are become partakers¹ of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end : (15) while it is said,

² To-day if ye shall hear his voice,

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

(16) For who, when they heard, did provoke ? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses ? (17) And with whom

¹ Or, *with*. Comp. ch. 1. 9 ; ver. 6.

² Ps. xcv. 7 f.

certainly thought they were far removed. They are daily to exhort each other, so long as the Holy Spirit will yet cry out to them the "To-day" of the Psalmist, 13 so that not a single one of them will become hardened through the deception of sin, i. e. through a timid fear of suffering or through the love for the world, which represents to them, that notwithstanding their discarding of the faith in the Messiah they could yet serve the God of their fathers. For those alone can continue to be 14 adherents of the Messiah, who has been appointed over the house of God, and thereby also partakers of the blessings of His house, such as they have become by believing, and who firmly cling to the confidence they have had from the beginning, on the basis of the word of God with which the author began in iii. 7, 8. For that in the present case it is just such bitterness of feeling, of which the Psalmist speaks, he makes certain through a series of questions, each of which is answered by a new question, the last bringing its own answer. As the readers have now been filled with bitter feeling of unbelief, because the return of Christ is being so long delayed, thus became embittered the whole generation whom Moses led out of Egypt, who certainly had heard 16 the promise that He would lead them into the land of Canaan. Against these the Lord was angered for forty years in the wilderness, because they had committed a 17

was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose ¹ bodies fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? (19) And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

IV Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. (2) For indeed we have had ² good

¹ Gr. *limbs*.

² Or, *a gospel*.

mortal sin, which was punished by their death in the wilderness. But the sin on account of which God denied
 18 them the entrance into His rest, was their disobedience; for God demands that we shall trust His promises. From this it is clear, that at bottom it was unbelief in these promises, which deprived them of the privilege of
 19 entering the Land of Promise. For this reason the author above has mentioned unbelief as the cardinal sin against which he warns the readers.

- 1 The writer is afraid that, after saying that Israel, while in the wilderness, had forfeited the promise of the rest of God, a person could think that in this respect the present descendants had not received full justice. For this reason they thought the Messianic times that have just begun did not bring with them a blessed rest of God, but a period of disturbance and persecution. Against this notion he states, that the promise itself had not been changed by the failure of their ancestors to attain their wishes. For this idea would imply the same unbelief through which their ancestors had lost
 2 the attainment of the promise. For just as these received the joyful message that Moses was to lead them into the Land of Promise, where this rest of God had been provided for them, likewise the Israelites of the present day, through the Messiah, have received the promise, that He would lead them into the blessed rest of the perfected kingdom of God. But the former

tidings preached unto us, even as also they : but the word of hearing did not profit them, because ¹it was not united by faith with them that heard. (3) ²For we who have believed do enter into that rest ; even as he hath said,

³As I swear in my wrath,

⁴They shall not enter into my rest :

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. (4) For he hath said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, ⁵And God rested on the seventh day from all his works ; (5) and in this place again,

⁶They shall not enter into my rest.

(6) Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter there-into, and they to whom ⁷the good tidings were before preached

¹ Many ancient authorities read *they were*. ² Some ancient authorities read *We therefore*. ³ Ps. xciv. 11. ⁴ Or, *So*. ⁵ Gr. *If they shall enter*. ⁶ Gen. ii. 2. ⁷ Or, *the gospel was*.

were not benefited by the word which brought them this good news, because it was not through faith appropriated by the hearers, i. e. they did not seize and accept it through faith. For it is certain with regard to all the believers from among Israel, to whom this writer and his readers belong, that they will enter into ⁸this rest only because they have separated themselves from unbelieving Israel and attained to faith. God swore in His wrath, that the Israel of that day was not to enter into His rest. This was done, although after the completion of the creation, the activity of God had reached a close, and God had entered into His rest. It ⁴matters not where the place of that rest was, but it is evident this is said of the Sabbath that followed the creation (Gen. ii. 2). Israel at that time failed to enter ⁵into the rest of God, not because this rest was unprepared for them. Nor need his readers now fear lest this rest be not yet prepared for them, when they perceive that everything has not yet been concluded that is necessary for bringing about this rest. For from ⁶this very oath of God it follows, that others, too, must enter into this rest into which God entered on the

failed to enter in because of disobedience, (7) he again defineth a certain day, To-day, saying in David so long a time afterward (even as hath been said before),

¹To-day if ye shall hear his voice,

Harden not your hearts.

(8) For if ²Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. (9) There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. (10) For he that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from his. (11) Let us therefore give diligence to

¹ Ps. xc. 7 f.

² Gr. *Jesus*. Comp. Acts 7. 45.

seventh day; and as those to whom this promise had been given, in their time failed to attain to its fulfilment merely because of their disobedience, it remained for God alone to determine a new day upon which the decision must be reached, as to who is to attain to this
 7 through obedience to His commands. But this He did a long time after the sojourn in the wilderness, when He spoke in the words of David concerning the Messianic period, by designating it with the word "to-day," when this ever hardening against the voice of God will bring about the same judgment of God, as was the case in the wilderness, i. e. a refusal of the rest of God for all who will not obey His voice. Now the entrance into the Holy Land took place under Joshua, between that divine oath and this warning through David. But
 8 if the former had been the entrance into that rest of God, then God would not have spoken in Ps. xc. of a day on which the people, long after their possession of Canaan, should be on their guard against bringing down upon themselves by hardening their hearts against His word, the same punishment that the generation in the wilder-
 9 ness did. There still is reserved for the people of God, 10 in the future, this Sabbath rest, in which everybody who enters into it rests from his labors, just as God at 11 the creation Sabbath rested from His labors. The

enter into that rest, that no man fall ¹ after the same example of disobedience. (12) For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. (13) And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

¹ Or, *into*. Gr. *in*.

point is that we strive to enter into it by not hardening ourselves, in view of Ps. xcv, and err not after the manner of the warning example of Israel, which God has Himself pointed out in referring to their disobedience in the wilderness. For this statement of the Psalm, like every word of God, is by its very nature a living word, i. e. a power proceeds from it which is able 12 to effect what God wants to have effected by it, namely, the obedience to His demand. It can do this, because, it being sharper than a two-edged sword, pierces the heart, and there uncovers to our eyes the first beginning of disobedience, against which it warns. If it, as it were, lays bare the deepest foundations of the life of the soul, by separating it from the Spirit, by the inbreathing of which it came into existence, it is more powerful than any, even the sharpest sword, which is not able to touch the joints where one member is connected with the other, nor the innermost core of the bones. The word of God, on the other hand, is capable of judging the thoughts which proceed from perverted tendencies of the mind, and the thoughts that proceed from perverted reason, and in this way reaches the deepest motives in which doubts as to the promise originate. For before the eyes of God nothing is hid- 13 den, not even the slightest impulse to sin, which His word uncovers for us, and it lies naked and bare before Him, to whom we must give an account as to how we

IV, 14-15] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

14 Having then a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. (15) For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but one that hath

have received the word which He speaks to us, and how we have permitted this word to do its work in us.

- In the introduction to the second part of the letter, it clearly appears what had caused the writer to apprehend that the readers might in the end lose their confidence in the approaching consummation of redemption, and in this way fall into the judgment of unbelief, on account of which the generations of the
- 14 wilderness were destroyed. For the admonition to remain firm in the confession presupposes that the readers are in danger of rejecting this confession ; and in this case he is thinking of the confession that Jesus is the Son of God, i. e. the Messiah, on account of whom they were hated and persecuted by the people of their nation. But when the Messiah is described as a highly exalted High Priest, and this for the reason that He has passed through the heavens, and is now found in the very dwelling-place of God that is situated above the heavens, it is hereby indicated that the author now intends to speak of the exalted character of this High Priest. This fact is, first of all, made certain by the exaltation of Jesus to the throne of God, upon which fact the reader's faith in the Messiah is founded. It is true that this very exaltation seems to remove Him so far from us that there can be no real confidence in Him as our High Priest. For this reason the writer describes, by way of introduction, what it is that makes
- 15 Jesus capable of such a highpriestly mission. For it is undoubtedly a mistake to suppose, that He, on account of His highpriestly exaltation, can have no sympathy

been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (16)
Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of
grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help
us in time of need.

V For every high priest, being taken from among men, is
appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he
may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins : (2) who can bear
gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also

with our weaknesses, which bring us in danger of falling
from the faith. He Himself, during His stay upon
earth, has experienced the same temptations in every
respect that we do, and accordingly knows full well
how hard it is to overcome them. Only in this respect
did His experiences in temptation differ from ours, that
they did not proceed from any sin that was in Him.
But such temptations are not felt as coming over us in
the form of danger threatening us from without, over
against which we become conscious of our weaknesses.
In confidence in the intercession of this sympathetic
High Priest, we can and should approach with full bold-
ness, in prayer, to the throne of God, whose grace and 16
good will have been won again for us through His aton-
ing sacrifice, and we can expect at all times to find there
that compassion which takes pity on our needs, as also
the good will, which promises us help in due time, and
consequently prevents the continuance of the tempta-
tion from being overcome on account of our weakness.
For this compassion on all our weaknesses is the char-
acteristic feature that distinguishes Him as our High
Priest.

For this very reason He is taken from among men 1
in order to be able to intercede for those who are like
Him, as the Mediator of redemption before God, when
He brings bloodless and bloody atoning sacrifices. For 2
as such He is able in His holy wrath, on account of

is compassed with infirmity; (3) and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. (4) And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron. (5) So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that spake unto him,

¹ Thou art my Son,
This day have I begotten thee :

¹ Ps. ii. 7.

sins, to act with moderation, and accordingly to distinguish the sins of weakness that originate in ignorance and carelessness, and for which, according to the law, there was yet an atoning sacrifice, from the
 3 sins of presumption, which were absolutely sure of punishment. For the fact that He was Himself afflicted with weakness, and accordingly was in duty bound to bring atoning sacrifices for Himself as well as for the people, which again presupposes that He, too, constantly is subject to such failings of weakness, enables Him to act with proper moderation in His
 4 judgment concerning the sins of His fellows. For this very reason, too, nobody can himself arrogate to himself the honor of representing his people before God, as though he stood far above them, although he is on a perfect equality with them. For this, a call from God, is absolutely necessary, such as all the high priests received by legal ordinance, just as Aaron himself received this (cf. Ex. xxviii. 1-29). Only in this way can they be certain that God will accept the intercession of the High Priest. But this demand, too, that is made for all highpriestly activity, is fully met in the case of
 5 Christ, who did not glorify Himself by becoming a high priest, But rather it was God, who, in Ps. ii. 7, declares Him to be that Son, upon whom He has bestowed full Messianic dominion, and whom He has also called to this glory, since Ps. cx. 4 expressly declares

(6) as he saith also in another *place*,

¹ Thou art a priest forever

After the order of Melchizedek.

(7) Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him ² from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, (8) though he was a Son, yet learned obedi-

¹ Pa. ex. 4.

² Or, out of.

that He is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. 6
 With this the author has reached the real theme of this part, which shows that Christ was not a high priest as those of the Old Testament were, but one who was infinitely exalted above them, which exaltation, as the author will show, consists in this, that God has called Him a priest after the order of Melchizedek. But first, it is yet shown how far Jesus was removed priest from forcing Himself into the office of a high and to the self-sacrifice that was necessary for this. Rather, in the days in which He took part in our 7 flesh and blood, and thereby also presented the full capacity for feeling the bitterness of suffering at death, He earnestly begged of God to relieve Him of this. With the strongest colors the writer depicts the remembrance of what he had heard from the Apostles concerning the struggles and prayers of Jesus in Gethsemane, that even amid cries and tears Jesus had brought the sacrifice of prayer and petition, that God should relieve Him from the death in which He was to give the highpriestly sacrifice. Of course He was heard; but, as this sacrifice had been decided upon in counsels of God, He was only so far heard that He was freed from the terrors of death which forced these prayers and tears from Him. In this way Jesus, although as the Son He did not seem to be in need of this, first had to learn obediently to submit to the will 8 of the Father, who had laid this suffering upon Him,

ence by the things which he suffered; (9) and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the ¹author of eternal salvation; (10) named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

(11) Of ²whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing. (12) For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye

¹ Gr. *cause*.

² Or, *which*.

and, by doing this, to attain to a moral perfection, 9 which enabled Him to become the author of a salvation that is valid for all time. Of course He can become this only for those who show the same obedience to Him which He showed in His sufferings, when He demands that, amid all sufferings they are to hold fast to 10 their confession of Him. Hence it has happened that God in this passage from the Psalms greets Him as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

In beginning the main theme of this section of the letter, the author dwells on the possible inability of the readers to understand him. The subject is most 11 comprehensive, and it is difficult to find intelligible expression for it, because their willingness and their ability to understand have constantly become more sluggish and dull. For, considering the time they have already been Christians, they ought already to be in a 12 condition to instruct other Christians; but instead of that they rather stand in need of being instructed in the elementary truths of Christianity, because they have not yet attained to a full understanding of the faith. The consequence is that they can take only such food as is given to children, who are not yet in a condition to take solid nourishment. If he should offer them higher instruction than this elementary matter, they would lack the ability to understand this; and such higher instruction is that which the author purposed to give in reference to the exalted state of the Messianic

have need again ¹that some one teach you the rudiments of the ²first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. (13) For every one that partaketh of milk is ³without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. (14) But solid food is for ⁴full-grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

VI Wherefore leaving ⁵the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto ⁶perfection; not laying again

¹ Or, that one teach you which are the rudiments. ² Gr. beginning.
³ Or, inexperienced in. ⁴ Or, perfect. ⁵ Gr. the word of the beginning of Christ.
⁶ Or, full growth.

High Priest, by which the Old Testament highpriestly office has been abolished. For in the case of a child it is a fact, that as long as it is nourished with milk alone, it cannot understand language that in itself is **13** perfectly normal, such as adults speak, but is totally inexperienced in this, because it is itself yet immature in the real sense of the word, i. e. it cannot express itself correctly. On the other hand, solid food, which is of **14** many kinds, is given only to adults, whose organs of perception through long experience have attained the power which enables them to distinguish between what is agreeable to the taste and is healthful, as also what is disagreeable to the taste and is harmful. In this there is at the same time the suggestion, that they might are not yet ripe for this higher instruction, in that they regard as false doctrine what in reality is nothing but the truth. But this immature condition is in their case something unnatural and even incongruous. In their maturity of age as Christians it is caused by a certain indolence in their spiritual organs of perception, which can, however, be overcome. And for this reason the author can demand of them to go on with him to the goal of Christian maturity, as *he* now passes beyond the **1** elementary teachings concerning Christ, i. e. that which he has in the preceding said of His exalted condition

a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, (2) ¹ of the teaching of ² baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judg-

¹ Some ancient authorities read, even the teaching of.

² Or, washings.

and His highpriestly office as Mediator, and takes up the higher instruction, and they now are to offer him a willing ear. *They* then do not need a perfectly new establishment of their Christianity, as though it were necessary for them to begin again with a regeneration, which would turn them from the external works of the law as also from sinful deeds, because these do not only not fail in securing the good pleasure of God, but, like all things that are dead, cause pollution, by contaminating the conscience. Nor is it necessary for them to begin anew with the second fundamental stage of Christianity, namely with faith. For the confidence in God, who has sent His Messiah and has thereby begun the fulfilment of His promises, is certainly not lacking to them, as long as they yet call themselves Christians. Then, too, it is not necessary for them to lay a new foundation

2 by being instructed in this, that the baptism which they have received is different from the Jewish washings, because it gives them forgiveness of sins, and through the laying out of hands, which was connected with this rite, they receive the Holy Ghost. Nor is it necessary for him to teach them again, that the resurrection of the dead, which they expect after the example of Christ, is something entirely different from the resurrection to an earthly Messianic kingdom, for which the unbelieving Jews are hoping; or that the judgment, which is to decide for all eternity, and which is to come upon all men, is something different from the judgment over the Gentiles, which Israel expects with the coming of the Messiah. These fundamental teachings were what had worked repentance and faith in them. Accord-

ment. (3) And this will we do, if God permit. (4) For as touching those who were once enlightened ¹and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, (5) and ²tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, (6) and *then* fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; ³seeing they crucify to them-

¹ Or, *having both tasted of . . . and being made . . . and having tasted, &c.*
² Or, *tasted the word of God that is so good.* ³ Or, *the while.*

ingly they are to take that step which will bring them to Christian maturity, he on his part by imparting to them this higher instruction, and they on theirs by willingly hearing these. Of course this is dependent 3 on God's permitting this, who alone can give His words power to overcome their spiritual indolence.

For indeed the case may occur when God no longer permits this, and when by the nature of the case it becomes impossible. The author presupposes the case 4 of a person who has already been enlightened by the word of the message of salvation, and accordingly had attained to the full knowledge of what we have in and through Christ, and that he has already personally experienced this. He has in mind baptism, in which we receive from heaven the gift of the forgiveness of sins, as also the Holy Ghost. For in the former we experience personally the fulfilment of a glorious word of God, namely, that which offers the grace of God to all penitent 5 sinners; and in the wonderful gifts which the Holy Spirit bestows we taste the powers which already belong to the future redemption. If such persons again fall away, they cannot even be renewed to a change of 6 heart, because all the motives for this, that the preaching concerning Christ and its confirmation in baptismal grace offered, have already been exhausted in their case, and yet these have not been able to move them to remain in the faith upon Christ. But rather on their part they have done what the unbelieving Jews did to

selves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

(7) For the land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God: (8) but if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned.

(9) But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that ¹ accompany salvation, though we thus speak:

¹ Or, *belong to*.

the Son of God. These having rejected faith in Him as the Messiah, have declared Him a deceiver worthy of the disgraceful death upon the cross. That such wickedness made a return impossible, is a judgment of God, which the writer illustrates by an image taken from
 7 natural life. Their case is like that of a field, which through the preparatory work of the husbandmen and through the rains that have richly fallen upon it, has been made ready in every respect for the bearing of fruit. If it produces the fruit that is useful for the owner, it partakes of the blessing which God has placed upon
 8 the tilling of the field. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it shows that it has not stood the test, i. e. it is land that fails to produce the fruit that was to be expected under the circumstances. In this case it meets with the curse and not the blessing of God, as is shown by the fact that men burn its products. In this way, too, those who notwithstanding all their knowledge and experiences of redemption have fallen away, will surely be punished by the divine judgment of hardening, which shows itself in this very thing, that they no longer can be renewed unto repentance.

9 It is certain that the author had a purpose in speaking of the terrible consequences of a real falling away from faith, which he saw as a danger already threatening some of them. But, with reference to the readers, as a whole, he is sure of something better; that is, of a

(10) for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister. (11) And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the ¹fulness of hope even to the end: (12) that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

¹ Or, *full assurance*.

condition in which they are yet capable of being aroused out of their spiritual lethargy and made capable of further growth; and that they are thereby near to deliverance. He does not doubt, therefore, that God, in their case, will yet permit what He would be compelled to deny in the case of those who had really fallen away. The writer finds this hope for the improvement of the readers surely founded on the justice of God. For this 10 justice cannot permit God to forget that, notwithstanding the weaknesses of their life of faith, they had in their actions not been without fruit, but it demands that He would permit them to be led on farther in their faith, and not be given up to destruction. For the zeal of their love with which they served those who belong to God, and still do so, is really shown to the name of God, which these as believers bear. The readers had accordingly proved themselves faithful in the services of love, not only over against the members of their congregation, but also to brethren from abroad 11 who had come to them. And what the author intended with his sharp words, is certainly only this, that the same zeal, which they had shown in their love, they should evince also in the certainty of their conviction that their hope would be realized in the end, and that they should not become unsettled in this 12 hope. Only in this way can they become the followers of those who, through confidence in the divine promises, and by continuous endurance in this confidence, even

VI, 13-17] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

(13) For when God made promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself, (14) saying, ¹Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. (15) And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise. (16) For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. (17) Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his

¹ Gen. xxii. 16 f.

- if the fulfilment was delayed, yet have attained to the possession of all that had been promised them. For the promises of God are the same in the Old Covenant that they are in the New. In this way the author can look back to the first recipient of the promises, since that which God has done in order to make this endurance possible for him, will also enable the
- 13 readers to show this endurance. Because God has confirmed this promise to Abraham by an oath, and that, too, by the highest possible oath, namely, by Himself. According to Gen. xxii. 16, 17, the faith of Abraham attained such endurance that He secured what was promised to him. This oath, indeed, referred to the promise of a large number of descendants, whom Abraham, notwithstanding his long waiting, yet saw coming in Isaac; but as these descendants were the people who had been chosen to be the bearers of redemption, then by and in these had been given the promises of the entire redemption that was to come and which Israel had
- 16 received and was yet to receive in their Messiah. Hence, too, the significance of the oath is held up to the readers, which already in the case of men confirms an affirmation in such a way that every doubt is put out of the question.
- 17 For this reason God, because of this method that obtains among men, has made known the unchangeableness of His counsel of redemption to those who are des-

counsel, ¹interposed with an oath ; (18) that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us : (19) which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering

¹ Gr. *mediated*.

tined to inherit His promise, and who are certainly those who, through the promise, have become the descendants of Abraham. He, as it were, has stepped in as a witness between Himself and the recipients of His promises, and has with an oath confirmed the reliability of His promise. But now, there are two things which by 18 their nature are unchangeable, because God could not possibly have lied in them, namely, in the first place, the promise as such, and then the oath, which confirms this promise, through which we receive a strong confirmation of the hope for the fulfilment of the promise. Of course not all the descendants of Abraham do this but only those who have become believers in the Messiah. For when the Baptist appeared and proclaimed the near approach of the judgment of God, and when Jesus then appeared and pointed out the way to deliverance from this judgment and for the attainment of eternal salvation, then the readers believed in the message concerning Him as the Messianic Saviour and the Author of redemption, and fled from the impending judgment and clung to the hope of salvation, which was apparent to them in the message of redemption, namely, to the deliverance and completion of salvation, achieved through the Messiah. For this alone insures the soul against 19 eternal destruction, so surely as an anchor sustains a ship against the raging billows, if it is firmly fastened at the bottom of the sea, and hence is absolutely trustworthy. But while the anchor is trustworthy if it penetrates deeply into the bottom of the sea, so the object of our hope is trustworthy, because it reaches

into that which is within the veil ; (20) whether as a fore-runner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

VII For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God

Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, (2) to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is, King of peace ; (3) without father, without mother,

even into the heavenly Holy of Holies, which, as was the case with the Holy of Holies upon earth, lies within the veil that hides the dwelling-place of God Himself, i. e. 20 because there in the world of eternity and unchangeableness it is reserved for us. That this is the case is guaranteed to us by the exaltation of Jesus. For He, as our predecessor, has entered into this abiding-place of the heavenly perfection, and has done this for our good, i. e. in order, as the Mediator of our redemption, to open the way for us there and to make our attainment of this goal certain. For He assuredly has become a High Priest, who, after He has atoned for our sins by His sacrifice, at all times secures recognition for this atonement before God. With this the author has returned to the theme of his second part ; for this High Priest is greatly exalted above all Old Testament high priests, because, in accordance with the promise, He is a priest of the order of Melchizedek.

In order to know what is meant by the expression, a 1 priest after the order of Melchizedek, we must first 2 remember what is said in Gen. xiv. 14, 17-20, concerning that priest-king ; but then also, what the Scriptures purposely themselves say of him as a type of Christ. His name already, if translated, means King of 3 Righteousness, and his appellation as King of Salem means King of Peace. But as we must especially note,

without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually.

(4) Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils.

(5) And they indeed of the sons of Levi that receive the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though these have came out of the loins of Abraham: (6) but he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath the promises. (7) But with-

the Scriptures make no mention of father or mother in his case and give no genealogy, say nothing of his birth, with which the days of his life began, nor of his death, with which his life ended. In this way it seems that he has been purposely placed on an equality with the Son of God, who has been from all eternity, and can accordingly be described as a priest who in eternity remains what he is. In order to recognize this exalted 4 state of Melchizedek, we are to remember, that it was no person less than the revered Patriarch, when he returned from the battle, who gave him the tenth of the choicest pieces of his booty. What this means is clear from the fact, that the people were by law compelled to 5 give the tenth to those who were selected from the tribe of Levi, as the real body of priests, to perform the priestly service. Not that they do this in a direct manner, but by receiving the tenth, from their brethren, the Levites, and these on their part secure the tenth from the people (cf. Num. xviii. 20), and accordingly from those who certainly, as the free sons of Abraham, were free from the payment of tribute. How 6 much higher than Abraham does he stand, who, with- 7 out even being a descendant from this so honored priestly tribe, has taken the tenth from Abraham him-

VII, 8-11] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

out any dispute the less is blessed of the better. (8) And here men that die receive tithes ; but there one, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. (9) And, so to say, through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth tithes, hath paid tithes ; (10) for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

(11) Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should arise

self. But more than this. As has already been mentioned above, he has also blessed him, the recipient of the promises, although, without a doubt, only the inferior is blessed by the one standing higher than himself. But if the Levitical priests receive the tenth they have a right to this only during their lifetime, whereas he, of whom the Scriptures declare that his life had no end, has this for all times. Indeed, since, as a matter of fact, they do not even of their own right receive the tenth, but because they have received the priesthood from the Levites, then the original recipient of the tenth is Levi ; and through Abraham, Melchisedek really has taken the tenth from Levi himself. For if at that meeting with Melchizedek Abraham did not yet have a son, then the seed, from which all his descendants sprang, was yet in him, and in this way Melchizedek showed, by the fact that he took the tenth from Abraham, that he was greatly exalted over this whole race, even in its most privileged members.

If then a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek has appeared, who was so exalted above Abraham and his seed, then the Levitical priesthood has thereby been abolished. If through the latter a state of perfection had been attained such as the priesthood was to bring, namely, the complete cleansing of the people from their sins, then the appearance of a different kind of

after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned, after the order of Aaron? (12) For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. (13) For he of whom these things are said ¹belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. (14) For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests. (15) And *what we say* is yet more abundantly evident, if after the

¹ Gr. *hath partaken of*. See ch. 2. 14.

priesthood, which is expressly declared to be a priesthood not after the order of Aaron, would have been entirely unnecessary. But if it had not been necessary, then this change would not have taken place. For since the entire legal status of the people was based on the presupposition that there was a priesthood in existence which was capable of atoning for the transgressions of the law that were inevitable in a sinful people, and in this way to maintain the religious relation of the people 12 to God, then the whole legal order was also changed by the fact that the priesthood was changed. But as a matter of fact such a change has taken place; for that Priest of a different character, of whom it is expressly stated that He was not after the order of Aaron but after 13 the order of Melchizedek, belongs to a tribe, of which 14 none had ever served at the altar. For our Lord Jesus Christ, as is known to all, was a descendant of the tribe of Judah, in connection with whom Moses had never spoken of priests, and to whom priestly functions had never been assigned. The complete change in the priest- 15 hood which had thereby been introduced, however, becomes all the clearer by the fact, that not the tribe of Judah, as such, had taken the place of the tribe of Levi, but that an entirely different kind of a priest had appeared who occupies not only the rank of Melchizedek but is also of a similar essence with him. For the latter did not at all become a priest after the norm of a command,

VII, 16-19] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, (16) who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an ¹endless life: (17) for it is witnessed of him,

²Thou art a priest for ever

After the order of Melchizedek.

(18) For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (19) (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better

¹ Gr. *indissoluble*.

² Ps. cx. 4.

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- 16 that makes the rights of a priesthood dependent upon physical descent, but in accordance with the measure of the power which confers an endless life. For when it is testified of the Messiah in Ps. cx. 4, that He is a priest in eternity after the order of Melchizedek, it is thereby stated that only because He, like Melchizedek, possessed
- 17 a life which had no beginning and no end, and which was accordingly not affected by human descent, He could give us this life as a sacrifice unto death, without it thereby being brought to an end, and thus by virtue of the unchangeable life He remains our Priest and substitute before God to all eternity.

- The abrogation of the venerable and sacred order of priesthood, according to which only Levites from the
- 18 family of Aaron could become priests, certainly presupposes that this order was only a temporary one, and that it pointed to another, beyond and above it, and could not in itself accomplish what it should have accomplished, and could not bring the benefits that were expected of it. And as a matter of fact the law, to
- 19 which this order belonged, did not bring anything to perfection, neither the establishment of a holy people through its moral demands nor the complete cleansing from guilt by its means of atonement. But naturally, with its abrogation a better hope is awakened, which is based on a new order of priesthood, namely, the hope

hope, through which we draw nigh unto God. (20) And inasmuch as it is not without the taking of an oath (21) (for they indeed have been made priests without an oath : but he with an oath ¹ by him that saith ² of him,

³ The Lord sware and will not repent himself,
Thou art a priest for ever) ;

(22) by so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better covenant. (23) And they indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing : (24) but he, because he abideth for ever, ⁴ hath his

¹ Or, through. ² Or, unto. ³ Ps. cx. 4.
⁴ Or, hath a priesthood that doth not pass to another.

of a complete atonement, through which we are really made capable of approaching God, because only the man whose sins are completely atoned for, can enter into communion with the holy God. Already by the fact that the new Priest, according to Ps. cx. 4, was appointed with an oath, such as was not the case with the former 20 priests, it is decided, that He guarantees a better cov- 22 enant, i. e. more perfect communion relation with God. For this oath describes Him particularly as one who performs the functions of His office in eternity, so that accordingly the covenant relation that is established by Him can never again be disturbed, nor that there would 23 be need of a new order of priesthood. This the priests of old could not do for the reason that by the fact of their being mortal, they were prevented from continuing to be what they were, and for this reason a larger number of them, one after the other, were compelled to engage in their task. On the other hand, He who remains in eternity possesses a priesthood, which 24 is never transferred to another, and hence does not need to be supplemented by a new order of priesthood. Because He lives at all time, in order to intercede for us before God. He has been able to save from eternal destruction those who have been completely cleansed of their sins through Him and who accordingly approach

priesthood ¹unchangeable. (25) Wherefore also he is able to save ²to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

(26) For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; (27) who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. (28) For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, *appointeth* a Son, perfected for evermore.

¹ Or, inviolate.

² Gr. completely.

God with full confidence, because at each new sin, which threatens to destroy the covenant relation to God, He can make His atoning sacrifice count in their favor, and in this way is really able to do what the old order of priesthood failed to do.

- The perfect character of the new priesthood appears in this, from this priesthood also in every other
- 26 respect meets our wants. We need a High Priest, whose holiness is not desecrated by any sin or guilt, and who, because He has been exalted above all the heavens and even to the abiding place of God Himself, is for all times separated from the sinner, whom He is
- 27 to represent. His state of sinlessness raised Him above the necessity, which existed in the case of the Levitical priests, at all times to sacrifice for their own sins first, according to Lev. xvi, 6-9, by which He would have been obliged at all times to interrupt His representation of the people before God. But the bringing of a sacrifice for the sins of the people did not demand this, since His self-sacrifice, which by the nature of the
- 28 case could not be repeated, sufficed once for all. For the law appoints men to be high priests, who on account of the weakness that yet adheres to them constantly commit new sins, for which they must sacrifice; but that oath which was spoken later than the law, has

VIII ¹ Now ² in the things which we are saying the chief point is *this*: We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, (2) a minister of ³ the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. (3) For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this *high priest* also have somewhat to offer. (4) Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law; (5) who serve *that which* is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to ⁴ make the tabernacle: for, ⁵ See, saith he, that

¹ Or, *Now to sum up what we are saying: We have, &c.* ² Gr. upon.
³ Or, *holy things.* ⁴ Or, *complete.* ⁵ Ex. xxxv. 40.

appointed One, who because He is the Son of God has no weakness, but who also through His self-sacrifice, by being approved in the severest test, has attained to a moral perfection which makes all sin for all times impossible. But the main thing is the further fact 1 that as our High Priest, by His exaltation to the right 2 of God, He has become a servant of the sanctuary in which God Himself dwells, and which, different from the tabernacle, was not prepared by man but by God Himself. For because it is the purpose of every high priest to bring bloody and bloodless sacrifices, thus He too must have something that He offers in that heavenly sanctuary. This was His blood, which He 3 had shed here upon earth in His self-sacrifice. If He had remained upon earth He could not even be a priest, and still less a High Priest, since there are such here 4 who bring the sacrifices by legal right, and accordingly there could have been no room for His bringing such. 5 For the Levitical priests do not serve any sanctuary whatsoever, but that one which is the shadowy picture of the heavenly sanctuary, since, according to Ex. xxv. 40, Moses had received the command to erect the tabernacle according to the image of the heavenly sanctuary

VIII, 6-8] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount. (6) But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. (7) For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. (8) For ¹ finding fault with them, he saith,

² Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,

That I will ³ make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ;

¹ Some ancient authorities read *finding fault with it, he saith unto them, &c.* ² Jer. xxxi. 31 ff. ³ Gr. *accomplish.*

which had been shown to him on the mountain. Accordingly then there remains for the new High Priest only the heavenly sanctuary itself as the place in which He performs His service.

In the third part of the letter the writer dwells upon the priestly service of the Messianic High Priest, which, too, is not only incomparably higher than the Levitical, but also by the nature of things has abrogated
6 the latter. How much more excellent it is can be measured by the fact that this exalted High Priest, who according to vii. 22, performs His service in the heavenly sanctuary, is at the same time to be the Mediator of a better covenant. For the new relation of communion with God, of which He is the Mediator, was a better one, in so far as it obtained its God-given order on the bases of better promises than those which were given when the first covenant was established. For
7 if there had been nothing lacking in this latter covenant, then in connection with the promise of a new covenant no place would have been found where a covenant of a different kind was to accomplish what the first covenant had failed to do. Such a promise is quoted in full from Jer. xxxi. 31-34. When the author states, that God in this passage upbraids the adherents of the Old Covenant, it is thereby indicated, that this was the

- (9) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers
 In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt :
 For they continued not in my covenant,
 And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.
- (10) For this is the covenant that ¹ I will make with the house of Israel
 After those days, saith the Lord ;
 I will put my laws into their mind,
 And on their heart also will I write them ;
 And I will be to them a God,
 And they shall be to me a people :
- (11) And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen,
 And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord :
 For all shall know me,
 From the least to the greatest of them.

¹ Gr. *I will covenant*.

greatest weakness of this covenant, that it was not able to make its adherents free of blame. The promise expressly points out, that the New Covenant is only to complete what the old had left incomplete. But then 9 this promise states, that this covenant could not be similar to that which was established at the exodus from Egypt, because in this exodus it had occurred that the fathers did not fulfil the obligation of this covenant and God accordingly did not feel Himself obliged to fulfil His promises. On the other hand, He promises, that in the New Covenant He will no longer write His laws upon tables of stone, but upon the hearts of the members of the covenant people, i. e. will 10 awaken in themselves the willingness and the ability to fulfil His will, whereby they really become a people that belongs to Him and He becomes their God, and the covenant relation is accordingly realized in a perfect manner. In this new covenant God will no longer 11 reveal Himself to certain prophets only, who then are to instruct their fellow-citizens and brethren, but He

(12) For I will be merciful to their iniquities,
And their sins will I remember no more,

(13) In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.

IX Now even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, a *sanctuary* of this world.

(2) For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein ¹ were the candlestick, and the table, and ² the showbread ; which is called the Holy place. (3) And after the second veil, the

¹ Or, are.

² Gr. the setting forth of the loaves.

will reveal Himself to them all alike. But the basal reason why the fulfilment of the divine will and the
12 perfect knowledge of God has been made possible in the new covenant, is certainly this, that there is a perfect forgiveness of sins in this covenant, which is given through the new High Priest. But if God, at the time of the prophets, called this a New Covenant He
13 thereby Himself declares, that the first had become old and aged, and accordingly was very near to dissolution. But then at the present time, when the promise of a complete forgiveness of sin has been fulfilled through the atoning death of the new High Priest, the old covenant has actually passed away and the new one has been inaugurated.

1 It is indeed true that the Old Covenant contained divinely given ordinances for the public worship of God and for the sanctuary, which latter, although not the heavenly sanctuary itself, was an imitation of this intended for the world (cf. viii. 5). The author describes in detail the arrangements of the tabernacle, in which the front tent, too, had its vessels, such as the
2 candlestick and the showbread, which pointed to such divine services. But it is a matter of special import-
3 ance for him, that this so-called Holy place was separated not only from the front tent by a veil, but also

tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies : (4) having a golden 'altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein 'was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant ; (5) and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing 'the mercy-seat ; of which things we cannot now speak severally. (6) Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services ; (7) but into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for him-

¹ Or, censers. ² Chr. 26. 19 ; Ezek. 8. 11. ³ Or, is. ⁴ Gr. *the propitiatory*.

from the tent in the rear, the so-called Holy of Holies, which again in turn had its own utensils for divine services. Among these the author counts already the 4 incense altar that stood in front of the veil and which was covered with gold, since the incense that was sacrificed on this altar was intended for God Himself, who was enthroned in the Holy of Holies. In the latter itself the Ark of the Covenant was stationed, which was covered with gold within and without, and which contained the tables of the law as the foundation of the covenant, together with the vessel containing the manna (cf. Ex. xvi. 32, 33) and the budding staff of Aaron as the pledge of the Aaronitic priesthood. But above this were enthroned the images of the Cheru- 5 bim, which overshadowed the so-called Mercy Seat, the glory of God itself, when this glory, as was the case in Ex. xv. 34, filled the Holy of Holies. But it is not the purpose of the author to speak of these utensils in detail or of their significance ; for him it is a matter of importance that the sanctuary is the place where the 6 Levitical high priests performed their ritual services, 7 daily, while only once in the year, on the great day of atonement, the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies, in order to bring for the pardonable sins of himself and of the people the blood of the sacrifice to

self, and for the ¹ errors of the people: (8) the Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while the first tabernacle is yet standing; (9) which is a figure for the time present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect, (10) *being* only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.

¹ Gr. *ignorances*. Ecclus. 23. 2 f.

God, by sprinkling it upon the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.

For as the Holy Ghost caused these arrangements of
 8 the Old Testament to be described so fully, it was evidently His purpose to indicate, that as long as the services of God were held only in the front tent, the way had not yet been made known by which one could reach the heavenly sanctuary itself, and thereby the
 9 place of a complete communion with God. The author sees in this a figure referring to the Old Testament times (in contrast to the future Messianic period of redemption) in general, in which, because the front tent barred the approach of the people to the Holy of Holies, a real approach to God was not yet possible. For according to the interpretation of this figure, the unbloody and the bloody sacrifices which were brought at that time, could not secure a perfect freedom from guilt for him who was engaged in such service of God, and without this no one could possibly come near to God, as his conscience testifies, by accusing him of his
 10 guilt which ever separated him from God. These too then were carnal ordinances, which, in an external way, retained and restored for Israel, as the people of the covenant, the necessary consecration to God, namely, the so-called Levitical purity, such as were the prohibition of certain foods and drinks, and the different washings, which purposed merely the legal care and cleansing of

(11) But Christ having come a high priest of ¹ the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, (12) nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his

¹ Some ancient authorities read *the good things that are come*.

the body. But in this case they could continue in force only until that time when all the defects of the old were to be done away with through the establishment of a new covenant.

But that wherewith Christ has made good all the defects of the Old Covenant is His atoning sacrifice made once for all. For when He came upon earth He came as a High Priest, who was to transmit to us the blessings of the New Covenant, that had come with Him. 11 Just as the Aaronitic high priest went once each year through the front tent into the Holy of Holies (cf. ix. 7), thus He was compelled to pass through all the heavens (cf. iv. 14), in order to get to the dwelling-place of God above the heavens. But this was not the heavens which the hand of God and the creation of the world had spread out above the earth; for that greater and more perfect tabernacle, through which Christ passed in His ascension, does not belong to our world at all. For if the blood of the goats and the calves, which were sacrificed each year on the great day of atonement, made it possible for the Aaronitic high priest to enter into the Holy of Holies, because he was 12 not permitted to approach God unless he had something to offer to Him (cf. viii. 3), in this way Christ, through His own blood, has once for all entered into the heavenly Holy of Holies. Thereby He knew how to accomplish a deliverance that was valid for eternity, because the blood which He offered was accepted by God as a ransom, on account of which He declared men free of guilt and punishment. How this

own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. (13) For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh : (14) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through ¹ the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse ² your

¹ Or, his *eternal spirit*.

² Many ancient authorities read *our*.

could be done, the author illustrates by the Old Testament means of atonement. In this case it was the blood of animals, and in special cases the ashes of a cow, which were sprinkled upon those who had been made unclean by touching the dead (cf. Num. xiv. 9). As a matter of course this could effect only a cleansing of the flesh ; but still this was cleansing of such a kind, that by this the consecration to God that was necessary for communion in the divine service (cf. ix. 10) was maintained and restored.

But now it is the blood of the divinely sent Mediator of redemption, which He shed when He brought Himself as a sacrifice on the cross. This sacrifice was without a blemish, as were all those of the Old Testament ; but it was His moral perfection in which He gave up His life. This as a matter of necessity must earn the good pleasure of God to an infinitely higher degree, if the eternal Spirit, who possesses an endless life in Himself (cf. vii. 16), enabled Him, to bring His blood, which was a ransom for all sins in the eyes of God, before God after His bodily death. In this way this blood could achieve what the Old Testament sacrifices, according to ix. 9, could not achieve, namely, cleanse our conscience from that consciousness of guilt with which our sinful actions defiled them as the touching of a dead person defiled in a Levitical sense ; so that we now can approach and truly serve the living God, who dare not come into contact with anything that is dead. Now we understand, how this High

conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (15) And for this cause he is the mediator of a new ¹covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first ¹covenant they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (16) For where a ¹testament is, there must of necessity ¹be the death of him that made it. (17) For a ¹testament is of force ¹where there hath been death: ¹for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth. (18) Wherefore even the first

¹The Greek word here used signifies both *covenant* and *testament*.
²Gr. *be brought*. ³Gr. *over the dead*. ⁴Or, *for doth it ever . . . liveth?*

Priest of a New Covenant could become a Mediator. 15
 For there had been a death, which redeemed from the transgressions that were committed under the Old Covenant, i. e. from their guilt and from their punishment. Now then those who had been called to receive the promises of the New Covenant, and who yet could not under the first covenant receive these on account of their guilt and punishment, from which this covenant could not release them, these could really secure in the New Covenant the eternal possession promised them, namely, the future consummation of salvation.

We saw in the first part of this letter, that the readers were still in danger of taking offense at the bloody death of Christ. For this reason the writer improves 16 the opportunity to discuss the necessity of the death of 17 Jesus. He begins with the statement, that a testament receives its effective power only through the death of the testator, because before that it could at any time have been changed. In this way the covenant which Jesus purposed to establish, could become effective only through His death. In Greek the word used means both "Testament" and "Covenant." At the institution of the Lord's Supper, too, Jesus had left the New Covenant to His disciples, as it were, as His testament, by giving to them under the symbol of the wine, His blood that was shed for them and which was to make this covenant 18

covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. (19) For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, (20) saying, 'This is the blood of the ¹covenant which God commanded to you-ward. (21) Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. (22) And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.

(23) It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things

¹ Ex. xxiv. 8.

² The Greek word here used signifies both *covenant* and *testament*.

possible. But the typical consecration of the Old Covenant, according to Ex. xxiv., had not taken place without blood, as the author now proceeds to describe it in
 19 fuller details than the Old Testament does. Moses had first read to the people the entire books of the law, and had then mingled the blood of the atoning sacrifices with water, and by means of the purple wool fastened
 20 to a branch of hyssop had sprinkled the people. He had purposely called this blood the blood of the covenant, because they could enter into the covenant with the holy God only if atoning blood was sprinkled upon
 21 them, to cleanse them from their sins. The author emphasizes the fact that not only the people, but also the book of the law and the tabernacle and the utensils, had to be thus sprinkled, since, according to the teachings of
 22 the Old Testament, sinful man contaminates everything with which he comes in contact. For as, according to the law, the forgiveness of sins could be secured only through the shedding of sacrificial blood; thus, too, almost without exception, cleansing from such pollution
 23 takes place only through sacrificial blood. If in this way already the images of the heavenly sanctuaries had to be cleansed through means of this kind, then certainly

in the heavens should be cleansed with these ; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. (24) For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true ; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us : (25) nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own ; (26) else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world : but now once at the ¹ end of the ages hath he been manifested to put

¹ Or, *consummation*.

the cleansing in the case of these sanctuaries themselves had to take place through a still more valuable sacrifice. For these too would be defiled when approached by sinful men who purposed to cultivate full communion with their God. This, however, was the case only when the pollution of guilt had not been first removed from them through the blood of Christ, which was of such infinitely greater value.

For Christ has not entered into the earthly sanctuary, 24 which, because it was made with hands, is only a type of the real sanctuary, but into heaven itself, in order to appear before the face of God and to place us before Him as those who have been freed of their sins through Himself, for which naturally a more perfect sacrifice was necessary than that of the Old Testament. Nor could He, as was the case with the high priest, who each year went into the Holy of Holies because of the 25 blood of the animal which he had sacrificed, have only the purpose of supplementing any possible defects of His self-sacrifice by a constant repetition of this sacrifice, which was characteristic of the sacrifice of the Levitical high priest. For in this case it would have been necessary for Him to suffer death repeatedly, and that, too, from the foundation of the world, since, as long as 26 mankind has existed, there were also transgressions, which could not be atoned for except through such a

away sin ¹ by the sacrifice of himself. (27) And inasmuch as it is ² appointed unto men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment; (28) so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him unto salvation.

¹ Or, *by his sacrifice*.

² Gr. *laid up for*. Col. 1. 5; 2 Tim.

sacrifice. But now it is a fact that He has been made known only once, and that at the goal to which the entire preceding historical development pointed, i. e. at the Messianic period, which begins with the sacrificial death, as the One who through His bloody sacrifice is able to atone for sins absolutely and thereby is to take away the power to pollute men and their sanctuaries with guilt. Just as, according to God's order, man is to die but once and then to be judged, thus too the Mediator of salvation can die only once; and what He has yet to do after this must have reference to the judgment. True; He has not died as men die, on account of their sins, but He has been offered once as a sacrifice, in His death, to endure the punishment which the many were to endure on account of their sins. For this reason also, when He will be seen for the second time on His return, He will no longer appear as the Bearer of the sins of the world, who for the sake of sins enters into death, but without sins, to those who are awaiting Him in the confidence of faith, in order to deliver them from destruction in the judgment.

If with the appearance of the Messianic High Priest, the Aaronitic priesthood has been abolished, then with the bringing of His High-priestly atonement sacrifice, the abolition of the atonement sacrifice on the great day of atonement has also been determined. In order to show this the author starts with the proposition that the law as such was only the shadow of the heavenly blessings which were promised for the Messianic period,

X For the law having a shadow of the good *things* to come, not the very image of the things, ¹ can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. (2) Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. (3) But in those *sacrifices* there is a remembrance

¹ Many ancient authorities read *they can*.

the greatest of which, as we saw, was the complete 1 atonement for sins, in consequence of which we are truly cleansed from the pollution of guilt, and in this way are placed before God as perfect beings. Indeed, in the atonement which was effected through the services of the Old Testament high priest and through the Levitical cleansing there was not even found a perfect picture of the blessings that are to be realized in the Messianic period, but merely a shadowy outline, which prefigures the character of these blessings only in the most general way. For this reason those Aaronitic high priests could bring every year, unto all eternity (on the great day of atonement), the same sacrifice, yet they could never thereby bring those, who approach for the purpose of seeking the communion with God to the sinless perfection that this communion demands. If this had been possible, then the bringing of sacrifices would at some time cease, 2 because those who approach for the purpose of worshipping God, would no longer have any consciousness of guilt, after they had once been really cleansed from the pollution of guilt, and they could therefore no longer need any new sacrifice. But, on the other 3 hand, every recurring annual great day of atonement, through the sacrifice, which the law appoints for this day, recalls the sin and the pollution of guilt that are yet present. The author explains this from his Christian standpoint by the fact, that it itself is an image

made of sins year by year. (4) For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. (5) Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

¹ Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not,

But a body didst thou prepare for me ;

(6) In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hadst no pleasure :

(7) Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me)

To do thy will, O God.

(8) Saying above, *Sacrifices* and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law),

(9) then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (10) ² By

¹ Ps. xl. 6 ff.

² Or, *In*.

4 sibility through the blood of an animal to remove sin and the pollution of guilt that results from sin. For 5 this very reason the Messiah, whom the author hears 6 speaking in the Messianically interpreted Ps. xl. 7 sqq., at His incarnation, with which He enters into the created world, in accordance with the way in which his Greek translation reproduces the Old Testament text, declares what He purposes to do here upon earth. God does not demand of the Messiah such sacrifices as those of the Old Testament, in which He has no 7 pleasure. But rather, God had prepared for Him a body, so that He, of whose coming the holy book roll had spoken, would fulfil the will of God by giving up His body in a sacrificial death. The author expressly 8 draws attention to the fact, that the sacrifices, which the Messiah declares are not pleasing to God, are those 9 brought in accordance with the demands of the Old Testament law, and that He discards those which He no longer wants, in order to establish the will of God as applied to the Messiah. But He demands that once 10 be sacrificed the body of Jesus, who as the Mediator

which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (11) And every ¹ priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins : (12) but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for ² sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God ; (13) henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. (14) For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanc-

¹ Some ancient authorities read *high priest*.

² Or, *sins, for ever sat down, &c.*

of redemption is called Christ because through His sacrifice we have once for all been cleansed from all pollution of sin and are placed before God as perfectly sinless beings and in this way are consecrated to a perfect communion with Him.

But what is true of the atonement offering of the High Priest is also true of the abolition of the sacrifices in general. For what does it avail that every priest on every day, when he performs the function of his office, 11 is engaged in bringing the same sacrifice again and again, since these, as was shown in x. 4, are under no circumstances able to remove sins perfectly. That the Mes- 12 sianic Priest, by the one sacrifice which He brought, has accomplished everything that the former, by their tireless efforts at all times only tried to do but never succeeded in doing, is seen from the fact, that He, after He had brought His sacrifice, had taken His seat and resting for all time at the right hand of God, and is only 13 waiting for what God is yet to do in fulfilment of the promise of Ps. cx. 1. For what has been said in x. 10 14 applies to His sacrifice that was made once, namely that through this sacrifice those, who have been consecrated to adherence to God and to communion with God, are for all time made perfect, i. e. have been freed from all pollution of guilt. With this the author returns to the introduction of the part viii. 8-12, by drawing

tified. (15) And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us ;
for after he hath said,

(16) 'This is the covenant that ' I will make with them
After those days, saith the Lord ;
I will put my laws on their heart,
And upon their mind also will I write them ;

then saith he,

(17) And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no
more.

(18) Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

¹ Jer. xxxi. 33 f.

² Gr. *I will covenant.*

attention to the fact, that the Holy Ghost, who caused this prophecy of Jeremiah to be recorded in the Scriptures, in it testifies of the existence of a perfect and
16 eternally valid atonement for sins. For in this passage He speaks of the New Covenant, which God intends to establish in the Messianic times (Jer. xxxi. 33). But the character of this covenant is expressly described as such, that God communicates not only the knowledge of His will, but will also give the mind which fulfils
17 this will, and that for the sake of the sacrifice of Christ, He will no longer remember any transgression that may
18 yet occur. But if the sins have thereby been forgiven, then a sacrifice for sins no longer takes place. The Old Testament atonement sacrifice has thereby been once for all declared superfluous and has been abolished. This is the culmination of the discussion of the author. From this the readers are to learn, that if they discard the Christian faith, they cannot, as they may perhaps think, find any satisfaction in the Old Testament redemptive means; for the writer has not only proved that these are insufficient, but has also shown, that and how these have been abolished through the sacrifice which Christ brought once for all.

Everything that has been said of Christ as the High Priest, and of the sacrifice which He has brought once

HEBREWS

[X, 19-23]

(19) Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, (20) by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; (21) and *having* a great priest over the house of God; (22) let us draw near with a true heart in ¹ful-

¹ Or, *full assurance*.

for all, the author, in concluding the two chief parts of this Epistle, summons together, in an exhortation for the present, which he directs to himself, as also to the brethren. Connected with what directly precedes, he 19 reminds the readers of the fact that we, because of the blood of Jesus, which cleanses us from all pollution of guilt, have the joyful confidence in reference to the entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, so that, as often as we come near unto God, we find the entrance to His throne of grace not closed, but opened. Jesus has Himself consecrated this way, which has been prepared 20 first for us, and which is effective, i. e. really leads to the goal, by having removed the veil which closed this way. For as long as He Himself was yet in the flesh, there was no way open to the Holy of Holies (cf. ix. 8). Only after this flesh had passed through a sacrificial death, was the veil removed (cf. Mark xv. 30); and He Himself consecrated the way that, for the first time, had been opened to the heavenly dwelling-place of God, by Himself going into it at the time of His exaltation. There He is now abiding as the Priest, who is infinitely exalted over all the Levitical priests, and who, after the order of Melchizedek, has been at the same time appointed as the King over all the family of God, 21 which consists of the believers out of Israel. For this reason He can give to them everything that they need in order to follow the exhortations of the author, and they can now, with a heart that really longs for the communion with God and His 22

ness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil ¹conscience; and having our body washed with pure water, (23) let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: (24) and let us consider one

¹ Or, conscience, and our body washed with pure water; let us hold fast.

grace, when they outwardly approach Him in prayer, as also in the perfect assurance of their faith, come to the entrance that has been opened for us to God. This assurance we can have, because we certainly have not been externally sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, as Israel was sprinkled with the blood of an animal during the Covenant sacrifice, but inwardly, since thereby the consciousness of guilt, that produced a bad conscience in us, has been taken away.

- 23 But as this cleansing from all pollution of sin has been symbolically sealed to us in baptism, which at that time consisted of the washing of the body in clean water, a second admonition is added. For in baptism the believers out of Israel have confessed Jesus as the Messiah, who has brought us redemption, and who has guaranteed the consummation of redemption. For this reason, it is important to cling firmly to the promised consummation of redemption, since He who has given us this promise, according to His faithfulness will surely fulfil this also.

- These two admonitions in reference to the real inner life are followed by another that refers to the conduct in the congregation. They are to pay attention to each other, in order to incite to love and to good works, at every place where there may be need of it, for which the congregational meetings especially furnish the opportunity, in which each one has the right to speak a word of admonition. But then it was necessary to attend there diligently. Here we are informed that it already occurred at that time, that some

another to provoke unto love and good works ; (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting *one another* ; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.

were accustomed to neglect the church's devotional 25 meetings, and thought that it would suffice to take part in the meetings in the synagogue, which they yet shared with the unbelieving part of their nation. This is the reason why the author was compelled to admonish them properly to appreciate the communion with God, which had been established solely by the blood of Christ, and to cling to the hope of the consummation of redemption, which the Messiah was to bring ; because in reference to these things, which at all times formed the topics of discussion in the conventicles of the believers out of Israel, these had begun to doubt or had become indifferent. It is only the pedagogical wisdom of the author, when he upbraids such desertions of these meetings seemingly as a violation of the duty of love, that they are to fulfil in the advancement of their fellow-believers. Of course this meant only the moral advancement, since the religious life of those of whom the author is thinking, itself showed most dangerous weakness. How anxious he really is in this matter is seen from his reference to the great day, when the Messiah shall return for the consummation of redemption, but also for the purpose of judging. The letter must have been written at the time when the Jewish revolutionary war was breaking out, in which Jesus saw the end coming (cf. Matt. xxiv. 15 sq.), and in which the author, too, sees His near return.

The author describes this hesitancy in reference to their confidence of faith and to the consummation of re-

(26) For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a certain fearful expectation of judgment; and a 'fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. (28) A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on *the word of* two or three witnesses: (29) of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy,

¹ Or, *jealousy*.

- 26 demption as a sinning against better knowledge and conscience in the case of those who have received the knowledge of the truth of redemption. For sinners of this kind the Old Covenant already had no sacrifices, since the Old Testament sacrifices had been appointed only for the sins of weakness and of error; how much less did the New Covenant have such, in which, according to the exposition already given, there is only the
- 27 one sacrifice of Christ, in which those who do not trust this sacrifice with the confidence of faith, have no part at all. Then, indeed, in view of the approaching return of Christ, nothing is left them except an inexpressibly terrible expectation of the judgment, in which the fire of divine wrath with unmerciful heat will consume all His enemies, to whom those too will belong who have committed the wilful sin of discarding their faith in the Mediator of redemption. Even in the Old
- 28 Testament there was no mercy for the intentional and wilful disregard of the law of Moses, such as God bestowed through the sacrifice upon those who committed sins of weakness, but only the punishment of death, which, according to Deut. xvii. 6, is inflicted on the
- 29 testimony of two or three witnesses. But, according to their own judgment, of how much greater punishment he must be deserving who has wilfully rejected the redemption which has been brought to us in Christ. Such a person thereby declares the Son of God, who has appeared as our redemption, as something not worthy of

who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified ¹ an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (30) For we know him that said, ² Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, ³ The Lord shall judge his people. (31) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

(32) But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings ;

¹ Gr. *a common thing*.

² Dt. xxxii. 35.

³ Dt. xxxii. 36.

consideration, which, as though it were a perfectly useless thing, can be trodden underfoot; he regards the blood of the covenant, because of which we have been consecrated to participation in the New Covenant, as common blood, and he thus blasphemes the Spirit, who has made us sure of the restored grace of God, as a **30** Spirit of error. We know what the punishment of such a wicked person must be, because we have learned to know that He, who, according to Deut. xxxii. 35, 36, has reserved such a person for His avenging justice and punishment, is the living God, who can also carry out **31** what He has threatened; and to fall into His avenging hand is something terrible.

The terribly earnest warning, just uttered, which gives us a glimpse of a serious condition of affairs, is followed, as in vi. 9, by an encouraging retrospective **32** view of former and better days, when the readers, immediately after they had been enlightened, and when the first impressions of the message of redemption, which caused them to recognize the truth, were yet living powers, had been compelled to undergo so many hard struggles and sufferings. The fact that the author makes special mention of these, clearly shows that it was the increasing vehemence of the persecution, which had shaken the hopes of redemption in the hearts of the readers, and at the price of forfeiting their faith in

(33) partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used. (34) For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ¹ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. (25) Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward. (36) For ye have need of ²patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *ye have your own selves for a better possession, &c.* Comp. Lk. 9. 26 : 21. 19. ² Or, *steadfastness*

the Messiah, had here and there already produced the inclination to become reconciled with the people of
 83 their nation and to be content with the redemptive means of the Old Covenant. They at one time had been the object of great amazement by the way in which they were content to suffer all abuses and oppression on account of their faith; or, whenever these did not fall upon themselves they at all times maintained their connection with those who were thus afflicted, and in this way exposed themselves to the same treatment in which their fellow-believers proved their faith. Even when im-
 84 prisonment followed, they openly showed their sympathy with the prisoners; and when they were themselves robbed of their possessions, they greeted this with joy as though they were welcoming an honored guest. They knew that, in contrast with their unbelieving fellow Jews, they had a better possession than what was taken away from them, as also a permanent possession in the consummation of redemption which had been guaranteed them. Do they now want to throw
 85 aside as something useless the joyful assurance which they evinced during these times of persecution? They certainly know, that the final consummation, as a great reward, is conditioned on the faithful adherence to this assurance. For God certainly does demand endur-
 86 ance. Only then if we, in enduring confidence in the

- (37) ¹ For yet a very little while,
He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.
(38) But ² my righteous one shall live by faith :
And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.
(39) But we are not ³ of them that shrink back unto perdition ;
but of them that have faith unto the ⁴ saving of the soul.

¹ Hab. ii. 3 f. ² Some ancient authorities read *the righteous one*.
³ Gr. *of shrinking back . . . but of faith*. ⁴ Or, *gaining*.

divine promise, fulfil His will, can we secure what is promised as a reward.

With this we obtain the first glance of the ultimate cause which had made the faith of the readers to falter. At first, in deep enthusiasm for the Mediator of redemption whom they had found in Christ, they had been ready to sacrifice everything for Him in the hope, that His speedy return would richly compensate them. But the return of the Lord was delayed, and in the place of the glory which they had been hoping for, and which this return was to bring, the oppressions which they were compelled to endure at the hands of the unbelieving 37 Jews daily increased. Now the author, as a true prophet, declares, with old and sacred words of the Scriptures, by combining Is. xxvi. 20 and Hab. ii. 3, 4, that it was yet a little while, when He, whose coming had been promised, would be present, being no longer delayed. But God, who Himself speaks in this word of the Scriptures, had declared, that His just one, who 38 complies entirely with His will, can attain to eternal life not on account of any merits, but because of faith ; for he who withdraws out of cowardice and casts aside his confidence on the divine promise, in him His soul can have no delight. And now the author includes 39 himself with his readers, by saying, that they surely are not the people to withdraw in a cowardly manner, which necessarily would lead to their destruction, but are a people of faith ; for faith alone leads to this, that

XI Now faith is ¹assurance of *things* hoped for, a ²conviction of things not seen. (2) For therein the elders had witness borne to them. (3) By faith we understand that the ³world have been framed by the word of God so that what is seen

¹ Or, *the giving substance to* ² Or, *test*
³ Gr. *ages*. Comp. 1 Tim. 1. 17 marg.

the soul, whose final destiny is certainly the most important matter, is not eternally lost, but abides in eternal life. With this the author has reached his fourth principal part, the introduction to which is found in this retrospective view. It is a matter of the greatest importance to understand the character of faith correctly upon the clinging to which salvation or destruction depends.

The very thing that those he addressed were lacking
1 in, is faith, which according to its essential nature is a firm confidence in things hoped for, as for example, the future consummation of salvation. But in so far as faith is directed toward facts already in existence, which are, however, of an invisible character, and concerning which accordingly we cannot be convinced by the senses, such as the Highpriestly character of Christ or the significance of His atoning sacrifice, faith is an inner conviction, a certainty that admits of no doubt. On the basis of such a faith the venerable men of the past, concerning whom the Scriptures speak, have
2 received the testimony of praise which the Scriptures
3 give. The fact that faith is the state of being convinced concerning invisible facts appears in its simplest form, in the faith in the creation of the world, with which the Scriptures begin. For only by faith are we enabled to perceive, that the world in its entire development in time was finished solely through the word of God. Exactly for this reason all that is visible was not made to proceed from that which can be perceived, but only through an expression of the will of God, which cannot be per-

hath not been made out of things which appear. (4) By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, ¹ God bearing witness ² in respect of his gifts : and through it he being dead yet speaketh. (5) By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; and he was not found, because God translated him : ³ for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God : (6) and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him ; for he that cometh to God must be-

¹ The Greek text in this clause is somewhat uncertain. ² Or, over his gifts.
³ Or, for before his translation he hath witness borne to him that he, &c.

ceived by us, so that this may become an object of faith in this sense. On the other hand, the sacrifice of Abel shows, that faith is a firm confidence in the manifestations of divine grace, which he hoped thereby to receive. For if God, according to Gen. iv. 4, looked down in mercy upon his sacrifice, and in this way gave testimony concerning his gifts, that in comparison with those of Cain they were made valuable in His eyes, then He, in full agreement with the sense of the passage quoted in x. 36, has given the testimony to Abel, that through this very confidence in the grace of God which he must obtain he had been justified, i. e. become pleasing to God. But again, when it is stated in Gen. iv. 10, that the voice of his blood called out to God, and in this way he is still continually speaking in the Scripture, although he had died, we find here only the expression of the firm confidence, that God will secure him justice over against his murderers. But concerning Enoch it is testified in Gen. v. 24, that he was pleasing to God, and for this reason was immediately translated to God, so that he would be spared the experience of death. But that this was granted to him on account of his faith, follows from the fact, that according to the passage quoted in x. 38, it is impossible to please God without faith. For the first evidence of godliness is this, that

lieve that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that seek after him. (7) By faith Noah, being warned of God concern-

we come to God with prayer and sacrifice ; and this is not possible without faith. Indeed in this very thing the double character of faith is shown. For we cannot approach to God without the conviction, that He, whom nobody has seen, exists ; and we cannot pray or sacrifice, without the firm assurance, that God will bestow the reward of their godliness upon those who seek Him in this way, in the hearing of their prayers and in the gracious reception of their sacrifices. But the same nature of faith is seen also in the case of Noah. God had given him the information, that He would destroy the whole world by a deluge (cf. Gen. vi. 17) ; and although nothing of this was as yet to be seen, Noah nevertheless feared it, and in the undoubted conviction of the truth of the divine word, he built the ark and at the same time had the assurance that his family would be saved in it. In this faith, he passed judgment upon the whole world ; for if he and his house could be saved only through the ark, then everything else, because it found no such place of refuge, would be destroyed. But he himself showed in this way that he possessed the righteousness, which he had inherited from his pious ancestors, such as Abel and Enoch ; for the fact, that he was obedient to the will of God, was only in accordance with his faith in the divine threat and in the promise of deliverance. If what the author had said in xi. 1, concerning the nature of faith, is in this way then proved to be true in connection with the creation of the world and in the case of those men of the primitive times reported in the Scripture, the same is true of the faith of the Patriarchs, concerning whom the writer now speaks with the fullest details.

ing things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. (8) By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance ; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. (9) By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a *land* not his own, ¹dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : (10) for

¹ Or, *having taken up his abode in tents.*

The author begins with Gen. xii. 1, where the history of Abraham opens. In the call that is there extended to Abraham, there was already a promise that he was at some time to receive as a possession the land to which he was to go. Trusting in this promise, he blindly obeyed and went forth, without knowing what his destination was to be. But even when he had arrived in a land which had been promised him as a possession, he was compelled while there to overcome in faith the contradictory condition, that without the rights of citizenship and property in this Land of Promise, he dwelled there as in a land belonging to strangers. Indeed, he was not even permitted to take a fixed abiding place there, but with his sons wandered around as nomads, dwelling with them, who were also the recipients of the promises, in tents, which are erected only for a temporary stay. But this was only possible because he saw in the land that had been promised him the terrestrial image of the heavenly City of God, which he was eventually to reach in the full communion with God (cf. on vi. 13). As in the first beginning of the divine acts of revelation the final goal of all of God's redemptive counsel was already included, the author now shows that Abraham saw the latter already in the former. In the firm trust in this goal of his hopes Abraham waited for the city, which was to have the firm founda-

he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose¹ builder and maker is God. (11) By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised: (12) wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the sea-shore, innumerable.

(13) These all died² in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

(14) For they that say such things make it manifest that they

¹ Or, architect.

² Gr. according to.

- tion stones that were lacking in his present tent dwellings, a city which was not made with hands, but which God Himself as the Architect and Builder had erected. But as this is true of all of his descendants, the author here already makes mention of the fact, before he reports further examples of the faith of the fathers, how
- 11 he had secured such descendants. For Sarah herself, who at one time had not believed (cf. Gen. xviii. 12), only in the firm confidence in the faithfulness of Him who had given her the promise of a large number of descendants, received the power, through her connection with her husband, to become pregnant, and this even in conflict with her age, as she had already passed the period in which women are capable of conceiving. Only for this reason could this large number of descendants
- 12 come from a person whose power of reproduction had also already died, such as was promised in Gen. xxii.
- 18 17. Concerning all of these men it is true, that they died away in the spirit of faith. For without having received the promised possession of hope, they had seen this only from afar, and yet had gladly greeted it. For if they all confessed, as did Abraham and Jacob (cf. Gen. xxiii. 4; xlvii. 9), that they were pilgrims and strangers on earth (cf. Ps. xxxix. 12) they
- 14 thereby stated that they possessed a different father-

are seeking after a country of their own. (15) And if indeed they had been mindful of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. (16) But now they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

(17) By faith Abraham, being tried, ¹ offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; (18) *even he* ² to whom it was said, ³ In Isaac shall thy seed be called: (19) accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a

¹ Gr. *hath offered up*.

² Or, *of*

³ Gen. xxi. 12.

land than this earth, upon which they were living only for the time being as in a foreign country, and that they were longing for their real home. They accordingly all died in the firm conviction that there was such a home for them. For in doing this they naturally did not think of their Mesopotamian home from which 15 they had emigrated, and to which they could long ago have returned, but of a better fatherland in heaven. They longed, and still long in the region of the dead, 16 for that City of God, which God has prepared for them, because He on account of their faith, was not ashamed to be called their God, who would give them everything for which they had hoped in firm confidence.

At this place the author returns to that act of obedience on the part of Abraham, by which he for all time 17 became a model of faith. When God put him to a trial, 18 by demanding Isaac from him as a sacrifice, Abraham submitted, and he, who had joyfully received the promise, was willing to sacrifice his only son, upon whom, as is expressly stated in Gen. xxi. 12, the fulfilment of this promise was based. This he could only do in the firm confidence that God would be able to awaken 19 even the dead; and God crowned this faith by permitting Abraham really to live and see this, since He, by a personal interference, restored to him the son who

figure receive him back. (20) By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come. (21) By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph ; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff. (22) By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel ; and gave commandment concerning his bones. (23) By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child ; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. (24) By faith Moses, when he was grown

- 20 had already been given up to death. Only in faith Isaac also could bless his two sons, since the blessing which he gave them referred to things that were entirely in the future, for the realization of which he
- 21 confidently trusted. Jacob in turn blessed the two sons of Joseph, who were born during his lifetime, in order to put them on an equality with his own sons, when he nearing death leaned upon his staff (cf. Gen. xlvii. 31). This again he could only do in the faith
- 22 that God would hear his prayer. Finally, Joseph trusted the promise, that his children were one day to return to the Holy Land, so implicitly that he already gave the instructions with reference to his bones, which were to be taken along to this Promised Land.

- The author delights in dwelling also on the acts of faith in the Mosaic times. Among them he recounts the fact, that the parents of Moses, after his birth, instead of
- 23 putting him to death according to the command of Pharaoh (cf. Ex. i. 32), without any fear of the king, hid him for a period of three months in the confident certainty that God surely had a special mission for such a beautiful child. But more than others, it was Moses himself, who, after he had become an adult, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh, by whom he had
- 24 been educated, and preferred to suffer abuse with his

up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; (25) choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; (26) accounting the reproach of ¹ Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. (27) By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. (28) By faith he ² kept the passover, and

¹ Or, *the Christ*. Comp. 1 Cor. 10. 4.

² Or, *instituted* Or, *hath made*.

people, rather than attain the honors and possessions 25 which sin would have procured for him, but which would at all events have no permanent endurance. But he would not deny that he was a member of his nation. But this became an act of faith by the fact, that in all the abuse which the people of God suffered, he saw an abuse inflicted on the Messiah; because it seemed as 26 though He, who had made this nation to be the people of promise, (cf. ch. iii. 3), was not able to avert the insults inflicted upon them. But to participate in this reproach he regarded as more valuable than all the treasures of Egypt, which awaited him as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, because he had firm reliance upon the recompense of reward, in case he suffered with Him who was to bring redemption to His people. Even the flight of Moses from Egypt, which in Ex. ii. 27 24, is explained chiefly on a different ground, the author considers an act of faith, because only his look to the Invisible One, of whose existence he was as certain as though he was seeing Him, could make Moses strong enough to overcome the fear of the king, who was pursuing him and in his wrath could punish him on account of his flight. But undoubtedly it was such an act, 28 when he, at the command of God, instituted the Pascha and ordered that the doorposts should be sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal lamb, in the firm confidence that in this case the angel of destruction, who

the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them. (29) By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up. (30) By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days. (31) By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.

(32) And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: (33) who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, (34) quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of

was slaying the first-born of the Egyptians, would not
 29 touch those of his own people. And that it was an act of faith, when the Israelites went dry-footed through the Red Sea, is certainly clear from the fact, that when the Egyptians, who did not possess this faith, tried to
 30 do the same, they miserably perished. In connection with this the author also mentions the first act of faith upon entering the Holy Land, when the Israelites, in the firm trust in the divine promise, marched for seven days around the walls of Jericho until these fell to the ground. He recalls the fact, that Rahab was not destroyed with the stubborn inhabitants when the city
 31 was captured, because in faith in the God of Israel (cf. Jos. ii. 9 sqq.) she had received the spies, so that they were not at all harmed. To report in detail on the times of the Judges, David, and of the prophets that
 32 begin with Samuel, would take too long. Therefore the author is content to give in a brief summary what these men, by the power of their faith, accomplished in
 33 deeds of war and in the cultivation of justice, or what they received as a reward of their firm faith in the shape of fulfilment of different promises. For this reason he recalls the miraculous deliverance of Daniel
 34 from the lions' den and from the fiery furnace, the

the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. (35) Women received their dead by a resurrection : and others were ¹tortured, not accepting ²their deliverance ; that they might obtain a better resurrection : (36) and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment : (37) they stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword : they went about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins ; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (38) (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth. (39) And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, re-

¹ Or, beaten to death.

² Gr. the redemption.

strengthening of Samson, after all his power had departed from him, and the wonderful victories which were given to such men, as also the stories of Elias and Elisha bringing back to life the dead sons of women. 35
The author dwells longest in speaking of the sufferings which many endured on account of their faith. He is probably thinking chiefly of the period of the Maccabees, when the faithful endured the tortures of the rack and refused deliverance from such tortures, which was offered them if they would deny their faith, their purpose being to attain a better resurrection, than that which those thus saved obtained, namely, that of eternal life. In the same sense mockings and scourgings, imprisonments and all kinds of terrible martyrdoms are mentioned ; but also the wandering about in 37 the crudest of clothing when they were fleeing from these, amid sufferings, oppressions and abuse, in deserts and in the mountains, with their caves and holes, where 38 they were as those who are banished from the world which was not worthy of them.

All of those who, on account of their faith, have received the testimony of praise from the Scriptures, of whom we accordingly would have reason to believe that they have long since secured what they so con-

ceived not the promise, (40) God having ¹provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

XII Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every ²weight, and the sin which ³doth so easily beset us, and let us

¹ Or, *foreseen* ² Or, *encumbrance*. ³ Or, *doth closely cling to us* Or, *is admired of many*.

40 confidently expected, have nevertheless not yet attained to this promised consummation of redemption. How much happier was that generation to which the author and the readers belonged. For this was to be the generation, which, according to the original divine purposes, was to live and experience the consummation of salvation in the appearance of the Messiah. With this it was given that the former were all compelled to wait until the Messiah, through His sacrificial death, had brought about that perfection which was cleansed from all the pollution of guilt, and without which the consummation of salvation could not be attained. For these too could and should not attain this consummation except with those to whom the Messiah came in order to cleanse them completely from their sins. For this reason the author can only urge upon 1 the readers, on their part, to strive to prove their faith by endurance. He describes this as a race with those who have attained this goal before them and who now in dense crowds surround the race-course like an all overshadowing cloud, because their interest in the race is intense. For this reason, as soon as the present generation shall also have attained their goal, after they have been tested, must come the consummation of redemption, for which they have been waiting so long with such expectation. Just as the runner casts aside everything that interferes with his movements, thus they are to discard all earthly things, which

run with ¹patience the race that is set before us, (2) looking unto Jesus the ²author and perfecter of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (3) For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against ³himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls. (4) Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving

¹ Or, *steadfastness*. ² Or, *captain*. ³ Many ancient authorities read *themselves*. Comp. Num. 16. 38.

would hinder them in the endurance of their faith. And just as the former especially lays aside his long and loose garment, which would coil around his feet and prevent his running, in this way they are to lay aside the sin of little faith and of despair, if their sufferings continue and help is delayed. All they need is that they look away from everything that hinders them in ² the race of faith, and look up to Jesus, as the one who, as a leader of an army, has gone before us in faith and has proved this faith to the greatest degree, and has accordingly brought it to perfection. For He, in order to attain the prize of heavenly joy, which was held out to Him, as the heavenly consummation of redemption is offered to us, has endured the extreme torture and shame such as the death upon the cross is, and has regarded this as nothing; but for this He has also attained first the prize of victory in His sitting at the right hand of God. If they do not want to tire in the race, which ³ can happen so easily, in case the strength of the soul in adhering to the confidence of faith is weakened, they need only to remember, that the opposition which He who was without sin endured at the hands of the sinners, was certainly something altogether greater than all that which they endure by the fact, that the unbelieving Jews continue to contradict the faith in the Messiah.

As yet they had not been compelled to give up even ⁴ their life in this resistance to the sin of unbelief and of despair, to which the antagonism of the unbe-

against sin : (5) and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons.

¹ My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord.

Nor faint when thou art reproved of him ;

(6) For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,

And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

(7) ² It is for chastening that ye endure ; God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is there whom *his* father chasteneth not ? (8) But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (9) Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence : shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of ³ spirits, and live ? (10) For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed

¹ Prov. iii. 11 f.

² Or, *Endure unto chastening.*

³ Or, *our spirits.*

5 lievers would lead them. They have forgotten, that
 6 in the exhortation addressed to them as His children
 in Prov. iii. 11-15, God has expressly described that
 they must endure everything as the loving and fatherly
 discipline through which they are to be recognized as
 His children. For in the very sufferings, which are
 necessary for our education, God treats us as His chil-
 7 dren. He certainly would not be a true son, to whom
 8 the father would deny this training. If He would leave
 us without the training, which these children of God
 had all experienced, then we would be bastards, whose
 father has neglected them. If we ourselves in rever-
 9 ential fear accept the training of our earthly father,
 which certainly cannot be given without discipline,
 why should we not be perfectly willing to submit to
 the discipline of Him who is the true Father of our-
 selves as of all spiritual beings, and in this way secure
 10 eternal life, which He thereby would make sure for us ?
 And although our parents, during the short period of
 our youth, chastise us, in order to help in this educa-
 tion, according to their best judgment, in connection
 with which doubtlessly mistakes and errors are made,

good to them ; but he for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of his holiness. (11) All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous ; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, *even the fruit* of righteousness. (12) Wherefore ¹ lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees ; (13) and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not ² turned out of the way, but rather be healed.

¹ Gr. *make straight*.

² Or, *put out of joint*.

the exercise of divine discipline on the other hand with infallible certainty is directed to what is truly beneficial to us, since it has only this one purpose of making us participants in the divine glory. It is true, that no discipline is a matter of joy for the present, but an ob- 11
ject of sadness. But if it is of the right kind, as is the case with divine discipline, then it produces fruit which richly repays us for all the sufferings which we have endured. For righteousness is worked, in those who are thereby developed and who submit without murmuring or impatience to the divine discipline, i. e. the state of being pleasing to God, which consists in a holiness similar to God's, and which is alone able to give us the true peace of our souls.

In view of the excellent results of the paternal 12
chastening, under which they suffer, the entire congregation is to arouse itself from the exhaustion of the confidence of faith, which has resulted from the continuation of these sufferings, just as men again raise up their hands that are hanging down and their knees which have been palsied. And just as when walking at a vigorous gait we must see to this, that 13
the paths upon which our feet are to move are even and straight, thus they, in the renewed consciousness of their redemption, are to grasp the joyful courage of faith to produce endurance in suffering. In this way only the congregation can provide for correct care of

XII, 14-16] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

(14) Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which which no man shall see the Lord : (15) looking carefully ¹ lest *there be* any man that ² falleth short of the grace of God ; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby the many be defiled ; (16) ¹ lest *there be* any for-

¹ Or, *whether*.

² Or, *falleth back from*.

the members who are already in danger. There were already members in the congregation, who like lame people, could easily slip at each step, but only under the influence of a strong life of faith on the part of all
 14 others could they again recover. It must be the most earnest endeavor of the congregation not through their zeal and contention to force entirely also these disabled members out of the congregation, but by harmony with them to lead them back upon the right way. As no one can without spotless holiness attain to a seeing of God in the perfected communion with God, it is therefore necessary, carefully to guard the consecrated character of the entire congregation, because this is destroyed through the falling away of every single
 15 member. Even if only an individual turns away from the grace of God, which the believing congregation has gained again through Christ, because he thinks that he can be content with the redemptive provisions of the old congregation, then thereby a poisonous root has grown up in the midst of the congregation, which not only seriously endangers the congregation through the misleading of others, but also contaminates the whole with the guilt of not having carefully guarded against the falling away of a member. For such a
 16 member of the congregation has committed the sin, which in the Old Testament is so often branded as the sin of whoredom, because he has broken his (marriage) fidelity to God. He is of a profane mind, because he despises and uses what is holy as something vulgar. For as Esau, merely on account of the mess of pottage

nicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright. (17) For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was 'rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind in his father, though he sought it diligently with tears.

¹ Or, *rejected* (for he found no place of repentance), etc. Or, *rejected; for . . . of repentance, &c.* Comp. ch. 6. 6; 2 Esdr. 9. 11; Wisd. 12. 10.

which his brother Jacob had prepared, sold his birthright (Gen. xxv. 28, 29, 30), thus does he, who in order to effect a reconciliation with the unbelieving Jews, whereby he is to be protected against their persecutions, casts aside his faith in the Messiah and esteems less the redemptive possession He has brought than his own earthly advantages. For a third time (cf. vi. 4 sqq; x. 26 sqq), the author reminds his readers with terrible earnestness, as they knew from the history of Esau, that such a sin will infallibly lead to 17 destruction. It is true that Esau wanted again to receive the blessing which he had so wantonly despised; but in the refusal of his father he met with the divine judgment of rejection. The author in the tears of Esau, Gen. xxvii. 38, sees his sorrow on account of this that he now no longer had any opportunity to make good again by a complete change of his mind his contempt for his birthright as the first-born. In this way he has already shown above, that according to God's divine order, the falling away from the truth, after it has once been known as such, is irrevocable; because, after the influences which are active in this truth for the production of a change of heart have failed of their purpose, there are none others which could accomplish this end. For this reason the author again describes the entire glory of the establishment of the New Testament Covenant in contrast to that of the Old, in order to warn against despising the former.

When the readers joined the congregation of the

XII, 18-22] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

(18) For ye are not come unto ¹a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, (19) and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them; (20) for they could not endure that which was enjoined, ²If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned; (21) and so fearful was the appearance, *that* Moses said, ³I exceedingly fear and quake: (22) but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the

¹ Or, a palpable and kindled fire.

² Ex. xix. 12 f.

³ Dt. ix. 19.

- 18 New Covenant, they did not come nigh to a place that could be grasped by the senses, as that was to which the people of Israel was compelled to come, in the place of the divine presence, in order to make their
- 19 covenant with their God. Nor did this presence announce itself through the enkindling of a fire, or through darkness, or through a windstorm, i. e. through
- 20 no terrifying signs, as was the case when the sound of trumpets introduced the voice of God, announcing the words of His revelation (cf. Ex. xix. 16 sqq.). So terrible was this presence, that those who heard it asked that not a word should be added (cf. Deut. xviii. 16), since they thought that they could not endure the terrible threat made, that he who as much as touched the mountain, be it man or animal, should be stoned (cf.
- 21 Ex. xix. 12, 13). Even Moses acknowledged, at the sight of these terrifying phenomena, that he was frightened, and he trembled. The readers, therefore, did not come to Mount Sinai as to the unapproachable place of the presence of God, which revealed itself in terrifying signs, when they entered into the New Covenant,
- 22 but into the place of the perfect communion of God, which this covenant opened up to them, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is also a city of God built around Mount Zion. But here the living God has actually taken up His place of abode with the myriads of

city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, ¹ and to ² innumerable hosts of angels, (23) to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, (24) and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better ³ than *that of* Abel. (25) See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they

¹ Or, *and to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels and the church, &c.* ² Gr. *myriads of angels.* ³ Or, *than Abel.*

angels, who constitute a constantly celebrating festive host around Him, as in the earthly Jerusalem; only on the great festivals, the congregation of the people surrounded their God who symbolically was enthroned in the temple. For in the New Covenant they have become adherents of the congregation, all of whose members, as the first-born sons of God, have a part in all of the blessings of this covenant, and accordingly, above all, in the perfect and blessed communion with Him, for the attainment of which they are already enrolled in heaven. It is true that a Judge sits enthroned there, but not one who pronounces His sentences in terrible majesty, as was once the case on Mount Sinai, but one who is called the God of all whom He has called to be His children, and who is surrounded by the spirits of all the pious of the Old Covenant, who, because they have already been made perfect by the sacrifice of Christ (cf. xi. 40), need no longer fear any condemnation. The readers have also come into a covenant that was established by His death, when they 24 joined the congregation, and in baptism were sprinkled with His blood, as the Old Testament congregation formerly was sprinkled with the covenant blood on Mount Sinai. This blood does not call upon God for vengeance upon His murderers, as was once the case with the blood of Abel, but it proclaims the reconciliation that has been effected for all in the death of Jesus.

Now, only one thing is yet necessary, namely, that 25

XII, 26-28] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

escaped not when they refused him that warned *them* on earth much more *shall not we escape*, who turn away from him ¹ that *warneth* from heaven : (26) whose voice then shook the earth : but now he hath promised, saying, ² Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. (27) And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. (28) Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have ³ grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing

¹ Or, *that is from heaven*.
1 Cor. 10. 30.

² Hag. ii. 6.

³ Or, *thankfulness*. Comp.

- they do not, as the children of Israel did at Mount Sinai, ask that God is not to speak to them in these phenomena that accompany the establishment of the New Covenant. If the Israelites could not escape the divine threats, which they did not want to hear, when God announced His law to them upon earth, how much more will the punishment be inflicted on them if they turn away from Him who now speaks to them from heaven, because they no longer want to believe what He is proclaiming to them concerning the approaching redemption of the New Covenant. If on that occasion His voice shook the earth in the terrible phenomena at
- 26 Mount Sinai, He now, in the prophetic word of Hag. ii. 6, which refers to the time of redemption, declares that a *final* shaking of the heaven and the earth is im-
- 27 pending. With this, reference is made to the approaching final transformation of all that has been created, which by its nature can yet be moved, but which is made for this purpose, that it is to wait on the new heaven and the new earth, which cannot be moved. As we are at the point of receiving an immovable king-
- 28 dom, which is never to be shaken or changed, the author appeals to his readers, instead of turning away from this message in unbelief, to receive it with gratitude. By such a gratitude alone can they serve God in a

to God with ¹ reverence and awe : (29) for our God is a consuming fire.

XIII Let love of the brethren continue. (2) Forget not to show love unto strangers : for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (3) Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them ; them that are ill-treated, as being

¹ Or, *godly fear*. Comp. ch. 5. 7.

manner that is pleasing to Him, if such service is accompanied by holy reverence and fear, which, always remember, that the God who has announced to us the near consummation of His redemptive work, is, according to Deut. iv. 24, at the same time, a consuming fire, since **29** His wrath delivers up to eternal destruction all those who, in unbelief, turn away from this message of redemption.

It is a part of the pedagogical wisdom of the author, that, in the concluding admonition, in which he for the first time states directly, what he considers necessary in the present condition of the readers, he reminds them of entirely general Christian duties, for the fulfilment of which admonition is at all times necessary. In this **1** way he admonishes them to endurance in brotherly love, in which respect the readers, according to vi. **40**, have been distinguishing themselves. Showing this love in the case of the brethren from abroad is demanded by hospitality, which he merely needs to mention. He does this with a reference to the story **2** of Gen. xviii. Christian brethren, too, are often of greater importance than they appear in the eyes of the world. In the same way they have on other occasions, shown their sympathy for imprisoned brethren (x. **34**). **3** They are to put themselves entirely into the situation of these as though they were fellow-prisoners, who knew exactly, what is necessary for them in the way of love and care ; and in the case of those who are abused, they are to remember, that they too are yet in the body, and accordingly may endure the same fate

XIII, 4-7] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

yourselves also in the body. (4) *Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge,* (5) ¹ *Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, 'I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.* (6) *So that with good courage we say,*

² *The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:*

What shall man do unto me?

(7) *Remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of*

¹ Gr. *Let your turn of mind be free.* ² Dt. xxxi. 6; Josh. i. 5. ³ Ps. cxv. iii. 6.

and very much need the same remembrance. To the duty of loving is added the duty of preserving their
4 morals in purity. Marriage is to be held in honor among those who are themselves married, by not polluting the marriage bed through fornication with strange women; but also by those who are not married, and who could commit adultery with the wife of another, since God punishes both. That their actions are not prompted by the greed for money, they are to know by the fact that they are content; since, according
5 to x. 34, their being persecuted often consisted in being robbed, through which they could easily be brought into the situation that they had to be content with little. For they know from Deut. xxxi. 6, that God according to His promise will never forsake them; and
6 they can at all times comfort themselves with Ps. cxviii. 6, in their hope for the help of the Lord. It is expressly related there, that over against this help no
7 body can do them any real harm in the sense of Matt. x. 28. They need only to think of their leaders, who have already gone home, and who, by the fact that through them the message of redemption was preached, are worthy of their highest esteem. In these, who probably had proved their faith by a martyr's death, they could see what the outcome of a real Christian walk is,

their ¹life imitate their faith. (8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, *yea* and ²for ever. (9) Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings: for it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats, wherein they that ³occupied themselves were not profited. (10) We have

¹ Gr. *manner of life*.

² Gr. *unto the ages*.

³ Gr. *walked*.

and then they should follow their faith. For Jesus 8
Christ, who was the object of their faith and the basis
of their certainty of redemption, is unchangeably the
same yesterday as to day and to all eternity.

For the first time the author comes to that which
is necessary for the readers in their present condition.
Various kinds of teachings had made their appearance
in the midst of them, of which their leaders who had 9
departed in the faith had known nothing. One person
seeks satisfaction for his religious needs in this, another
in that feature of the Old Covenant; one in scriptural
learning, another in the prompt fulfilment of the law;
one in a service of sacrifice, another in sacrificial meals.
Evidently by everything of this sort they were only
missing the one foundation of salvation. For in truth
the heart can be made firm in its confidence of salvation
only through the divine grace, which Christ imparts to
us. The author shows an example of this, which gives
him the opportunity of introducing his final chief
admonition. In the Old Covenant the people expected
the strengthening of their confidence of salvation
through partaking of the meat of the sacrifices at the
sacrificial meal, which, according to 1 Cor. x. 18 is
to bring them into communion with the presence of
divine grace at the altar. But even if it is possible to
strengthen oneself for bodily walking by means of
bodily food; foods of this kind for the walk in the
spiritual sense can have no benefit. But for the believers
such sacrificial foods do not even exist. They have 10
only one altar, upon which Christ sacrificed Himself as

XIII, 11-14] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

an altar, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. (11) For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the holy place ¹ by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned without the camp. (12) Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate. (13) Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. (14) For we

¹ Gr. *through*.

-
- the completion of the atonement sacrifice on the great day of atonement. But the Levitical priests, who under other circumstances, according to the Old Testament orders, received their share of all the sacrifices, could not eat from that altar upon which this sacrifice
- 11 was brought. For the bodies of the animals, the blood of which the high priest on this day brought into the Holy of Holies for the atonement for sins, had to be
- 12 burned outside of the camp. In accordance with this model Jesus also was compelled, by His sacrifice once made to consecrate the people by a cleansing from all of the pollution of their sins for the New Covenant with God, to suffer death outside of the gates of Jerusalem, at the place of the skulls. But with this, like those animals which were burned outside of the camp, He was cast out from the communion of the people consecrated to God. And this brings the author to the main point which he wishes to teach. In his eyes it seemed absolutely necessary, in order to escape the dangers of the present condition of affairs, that the believers out of Israel must entirely give up their social and religious
- 13 communion with their people, which they continued to maintain. But thereby they did nothing else, than go out to their Lord and Saviour, even if, as was the case with Him, who as a culprit polluting the congregation that was consecrated to God was sacrificed outside of the gates, they were compelled to submit to the in-
- 14 sults of being called heretics and renegades. As they

have not here an abiding city, but we seek after *the city* which is to come. (15) Through him ¹ then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name. (16) But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. (17) Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to *them*: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with ² grief: for this *were* unprofitable for you.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *then*.

² Gr. *groaning*.

are seeking nothing else than the consummation of redemption that has been prepared for them, then they cannot be pained by the breaking of the bonds which unite them with their earthly home, which are not at all permanent. In the place of the sacrifices which the Levitical priests performed for them, that only sacrifice has come, which at all times they can render through 15 their heavenly High Priest, when their lips, which confess His name and thereby give testimony of His glory, bring to God a constant sacrifice of praise (cf. Ps. liv. 8). But, if their sacrifice is to be pleasing to God, 16 they must not in this connection forget the sacrifice of their deeds, which consist in words of charity and in other evidences of the communion of love.

The present leaders of the congregation seem to have been ever strong in the faith, but there was a lack of 17 obedience and submission to them. For this reason the author in his concluding word admonishes so emphatically, that these had not only been appointed as their leaders in external matters, but they are also to have care for their souls, and in the judgment of God must give an account, if they have also at all times watched over their souls, and protected them against all temptation and led them to eternal redemption. For only if they obey these, can the latter do their duty with pleasure; but if, on the other hand, they must do this with grief, on account of their disobedience, then it cer-

XIII, 18-21] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

(18) Pray for us : for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things. (19) And I exhort *you* the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

(20) Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep ¹ with the blood of an eternal covenant, *even* our Lord Jesus, (21) make you perfect in every

¹ Or, *by*. Gr. *in*.

- tainly is no benefit to them, but must rather increase their heavy responsibility. Thereupon the author ap-
18 peals to them to pray for himself and his associates. He hints, that he knows full well, that among those readers who think after the manner of the strict Jews, doubts have arisen, if they have not suffered harm through the Gentile Christian circles, in which they are moving. For he bases their worthiness for the petitions of the readers on the fact, that they on their part are convinced, that they have a good conscience, which gives them testimony that they are striving to lead a good life among all men with whom they live. Still more than
19 for his associates, he admonishes them to pray for himself, so that the hindrance can be removed, which so far had prevented his return to them, and that sooner than appearances would indicate, he may be returned to them, among whom he has his real home. Finally, he
20 appeals to God, as the one who alone can give peace of soul, if He fulfils this prayer and wish for them. God has for this purpose brought our Lord Jesus from the dead ; and because of this, that through His blood He has established an eternal covenant, which cannot be abrogated as the old one was. He has appointed Him to be the great Shepherd of His own people, who now for the first time are really joined with Him as His fold. Through Jesus Christ, he prays that He may make
21 them prepared in every good thing which belongs to the fulfilment of His will, by awakening in His own in-

good ¹ thing to do his will, working in ² us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory ³ for ever and ever. Amen.

(22) But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation: for I have written unto you in few words.

(23) Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he comes shortly, I will see you.

(24) Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. ⁴ They of Italy salute you.

(25) Grace be with you all. Amen.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *work*. ² Many ancient authorities read *you*.
³ Gr. *unto the age of the ages*. ⁴ Or, *The brethren from, &c.*

terests that which is pleasing in His eyes in all the believers. To Him then, the only Mediator of our redemption, shall all honor be given to all eternity.

As the author in a postscript admonishes his brethren, 22 in a winning address, to accept the exhortation of their brother, it is clear that from the outset he was by no means sure of this willingness on the part of the congregation. It almost sounds like an apology when he excuses this yet by a reference to the brevity of his letter. If it was too much for them that he was writing at all, it is much too little for him to have written what he did, in comparison with the anxiety for them which fills his heart. They are to know that Timothy, 23 who is a brother to him as to them, has been freed from his captivity, of which they knew; and if he should come sooner, his arrival would indicate that he would accompany him on his return. He directs those to whom the letter is entrusted, and who doubtless belonged to the leaders of the congregation, to greet the 24 other leaders and all the members of the congregation, including those who had caused him great anxiety. He sends greetings from several members of the congregation, who were tarrying in Italy, and those he had met on his journey to that country. In the end he prays that all the readers may be guided by divine grace.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF
JAMES

I ¹ James, a ² servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, ³ greeting.

¹ Or, *Jacob*.

² Gr. *bondservant*.

³ Gr. *wissheth joy*.

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- 1 According to the superscription, this Epistle is written by a certain James, who describes himself only as one who, by serving the exalted Lord Jesus, has dedicated his life to the exclusive service of God. He must, accordingly, have occupied a very high position in the congregation, because he thinks that the mere use of his name, which was a very common one, would suffice to identify him, and accordingly he can have been none other than the best known James, who in later times stood at the head of the congregation in Jerusalem, as Peter originally did. But this was not one of the two Apostles, whom the gospels call James, in which case he would have simply called himself such, as Paul or Peter do, but he was one of the brothers of the Lord, who are already mentioned in the gospels. It certainly was principally this personal relation to the Lord which had secured for him this leading position in the congregation. But he expressly makes this prominent, that it was not this, which gave him the right to address his readers by letter, but it was his service, to which he had consecrated his life, and which compelled him to write. These readers, however, in a very general way are described as belonging to the people of the twelve tribes, although they do not belong

to Palestine but to the Dispersion, i. e. those in heathen countries. While he then is personally engaged in his work in the Jewish country, he feels himself under obligation to address by letter the people of his nation who live outside of this country. If a servant of Jesus Christ does this, it is of course self-evident that in this connection he is first of all thinking of those who have become believers. But he intentionally chooses this very general term. We know that this James, on account of his legalistic piety, was held in high esteem also by the people of his nation who had remained unbelievers; and in this way he could presuppose, that many of these, if they had occasion to learn of this letter, would take to heart its earnest admonitions, of which not a few, as we will see, are expressly directed to such persons. This again further presupposes, that the Jews, to whom James is writing, are still living in such intimate religious and social intercourse with their unbelieving fellows, that the latter too could easily receive information concerning a letter from that highly esteemed James, which interested the others. There in the Dispersion, as a matter of course, the Jew stood infinitely closer to the fellow Jew, even if he was separated from him by his faith in Jesus as the Messiah, than he did to the Gentiles among whom he was compelled to live. As the entire Epistle shows how intimately the author is acquainted with the circumstances of the readers, it was natural that it should be sent to certain circles of the believing Jews in the Dispersion, concerning whom James will have received more complete information. The author, however, presupposes that conditions in other portions of the Diaspora will not be different, and that the word of admonition from the head of the original congregation, addressed to them, will, as a matter of course, be communicated to believers in other places also. As he writes to Jews who speak the Greek,

(2) Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold ¹ temptations; (3) knowing that the proving of your faith worketh ² patience. (4) And let ² patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

¹ Or, *trials*.

² Or, *steadfastness*.

his greeting is of a kind that is generally found in Greek letters (cf. Acts xv. 23; xxiii. 26), and expresses the hope that the readers may be in the enjoyment of good health.

- 2 The introduction to the letter at once transfers us into the external circumstances of the readers. We hear that the Christian brethren of the author are assailed by different kinds of temptations, which grew out of their living together with the unbelieving Jews, who charged them with having become traitors to the
- 3 faith of the fathers and who oppressed them. For that the writer has in mind trials in regard to their faith, is clear from the fact, that James bases his exhortation, to consider these trials as pure and unadulterated joy on this, that they certainly must know, that God has ordained these trials only as a means to try that very faith, by which they are distinguished from their fellow Jews. For in this case these can only serve to produce in them that endurance of faith through which faith is shown
- 4 to be of the right kind; and then they can rejoice, that these trials have given them opportunity for such a proof of their faith. This endurance in faith must show itself in every phase of their Christian life, so that the latter, as James expresses himself with reference to the faultless character demanded of the sacrifices, may be entirely perfect in every particular, and that it may in no way be lacking anything that is necessary to make it well pleasing to God. But now it could happen—and we will see why such was the condition of

(5) But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (6) But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. (7) For let not that man think ¹that he shall receive anything of the Lord; (8) a doubleminded man, unstable all his ways.

¹ Or, *that a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways, shall receive anything of the Lord.*

affairs among the readers—that some lacked the true wisdom that at all times shows us how we can be well pleasing to God, and which urges us on to comply with this demand. But this cannot serve us as an excuse. For we know that God, who at once gives us what we ask for, and not perchance as men do, who are wont to chide the troublesome beggar, will give us, if we ask Him for the wisdom that is necessary for the general proof of our endurance. True, this prayer must be one of faith, which in no particular doubts of being heard. For James compares the doubter, who hesitates between trusting whether he will be heard and mistrusting whether God can or will hear him, with the waves of the sea, which are cradled back and forth by the wind. It would be a vain folly if such a person thought that he would receive anything from God. For he, as it were, has two hearts in his breast, one believing and one unbelieving; and for this reason, in the whole conduct of his life he will be unstable, because one of them urges him on to a life that is pleasing to God and the other to one that displeases Him.

This brings the author back again to his starting-point, where he spoke of the undivided and continuous proof of their faith; for this faith is certainly nothing but the confidence in God, who in Christ has bestowed His grace upon us, and thereby has promised us full redemption for time and eternity. Now we hear what

(9) But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate : (10) and the rich, in that he is made low : because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. (11) For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass ; and

- 9 it was that so often made the Christian brethren in foreign lands to doubt their faith. It was their low and oppressed condition, which seemed to stand in such a glaring contradiction to the time of redemption, which they had promised themselves from the Messiah. Christianity, as we know, among Jews and Gentiles (cf. 1 Cor. 1-26), had found acceptance in the lower circles ; and if their rich associates, who had remained in their unbelief, even before this already despised and oppressed the poor, they thought that they could now abuse the renegades to their hearts' content. But the believers are to know that, in contrast to these they could boast of the greatest advantage in the possession of redemption, which has already been given them through Christ, and which has been guaranteed them for the future, and which gives to them an incomparable greatness. What has the unbelieving rich man to oppose to this, if he would glory in any advantage over
- 10 them ? Certainly only external possession, the rapid disappearance of which will only humiliate them most deeply, when it appears how soon they are put to nought with all their glory, like the flowering of the grass. Exactly as did the Old Testament prophets (cf. Is. xv. 7), James describes how often it happened
- 11 that the hot wind, which began at sunrise, would at once rob beautiful fields of all their glory. Here already he evidently presupposes, that the unbelieving rich persons, too, will hear what he has written, when he so emphatically states that the rich man also, if he has nothing more than his riches, will, like these fields,

the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth : so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings.

(12) Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which *the Lord* promised to them that love him. (13) Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted ¹ of God : for God ² cannot be tempted with ³ evil, and he himself tempteth

¹ Gr. *from*.

² Or, *is untried in evil*.

³ Gr. *evil things*.

with away, i. e. will be destroyed, in the midst of his way, upon which he thought that he was walking in such safety, in case he is deprived of these riches. On 12 the other hand, he pictures the man who bears in patience the test of his faith, which is found in his oppressed condition. Such a man is blessed, because the test of his faith, shown in such patience, crowns him with a crown of honor in this, that God gives him eternal life, which He has promised to those who believe in Him. For only he who loves God will find in the spiritual and heavenly blessings, which He has sent to us through His Messiah, the motives to believe in Christ, and in all trials to abide in this faith.

In leading over to the subject of his letter, he adds 13 the warning not to ascribe to God the blame for their sins, to which their many kinds of trials tempt them. Evidently among the believers out of Israel complaints were often heard, that God was making their trials too hard. Certain it is, that God brings about the conditions of life which furnish the opportunity for sinning, but not for the purpose of causing us to sin, but to try if the believer will prove his faith by overcoming the impulse to sin. These conditions of life in which we find ourselves have been ordained for a test, and not as a temptation ; for God, who Himself can be induced by nothing to do any thing evil, certainly cannot cause others to do evil. That which converts the test into a temptation is solely the sinful lust that comes from our

no man : (14) but each man is ¹ tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. (15) Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin : and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death. (16) Be not deceived, my beloved brethren. (17) Every good ² gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. (18) Of his own will he brought us forth

¹ Or, *tempted by his own lust, being drawn away by it and enticed.*

² Or, *giving.*

- 14 own hearts. This lust is pictured as an adulteress who coaxes and cajoles man through the attractions of that which is forbidden, as a fisherman does the fish. If a
 15 man submits to her, and indulges in sinful intercourse with her, then the fruit of these relations is sin, since man when drawn on to satisfy his sinful ends, commits sin. Sin, however, if it is not checked in its development by a timely return, but if permitted to mature and to become the power which exercises the supremacy over man, brings death with it already, and to this it gives birth when man is overcome by the punishment for his
 16 sin, and dies. In this regard the beloved brethren are to remain in no doubt, that if their circumstances lead them to sin, they, and they alone, are to blame for this. If all good giving, and therefore every perfect present, comes from above, this is so, because He that hath created the heavenly lights as the symbols of perfect salvation and happiness, can give nothing that would
 17 be of a different kind. It is indeed true that the heavenly lights can undergo a change from shining to not shining, or can for the time be darkened, if by a change of position the one casts a shadow upon the other. But in the case of God there can be no such change, as though He could to-day give something good, and to-morrow something bad.
 18 For the greatest gift, which they have received in

by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

(19) ¹Ye know *this*, my beloved brethren. But let every

¹ Or, *Know ye*.

their conversion to Christianity, is their regeneration, which has been worked in them through the word of truth in the proclamation of the Gospel. As this regeneration proceeded entirely from His own free and voluntarily act, God can thereby have intended nothing else, than to make them, as it were, the first-fruits that had been consecrated to Him among all His creatures, which fruits are brought to Him as a faultless sacrifice (cf. v. 4). But in this case it cannot be His purpose through the trials to which He subjects them, to lead them to sin, which is displeasing to Him and could make them incapable of truly belonging to Him. But they are fully instructed concerning the fact that they 19 have been born again in this manner, and concerning the manner in which this has been accomplished through the word of truth, as also concerning the purpose which God had in view in doing this. On these matters it is not necessary for James to write them anything. But of what follows from this for their conduct, he purposes to speak. In this way the theme of his letter is given as a matter of course. For they must of course hear again and again the word through which they have been born again, so that the life that was produced by this word would grow and prosper. They cannot become too diligent in this hearing. And now is mentioned what James intends to antagonize as the fundamental evil in his readers. They were very zealous in speaking of their faith and in preaching the word of truth to others, i. e. to the unbelieving Jews. They began to be passionately excited, if these would not listen, and thought that they were only exercising a

man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath : (20) for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. (21) Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of ¹ wickedness, receive with meekness the ² implanted word,

¹ Or, *malice*.

² Or, *inborn*.

just judgment over those whom they condemned on account of their unbelief. But they forgot what certainly should make us careful, not to yield to the propensity to engage in such angry contentions, namely, that
 20 human wrath does not practise righteousness as God practises this, when He is angry and punishes, in case both are well deserved ; whereas human wrath easily becomes unjust and for this reason does not attain the object of its zeal. We will see that the whole letter is only the development of this thought.

The first part of the letter follows directly from that
 21 which has just been said concerning passionate zeal and anger. In Christian gentleness, which makes all arousing of wrath impossible, we are to lay aside everything by which the naturally evil mind of man would pollute our anger with sin and lead it to excess. But then we are at all times to appropriate again the word of truth, which in regeneration has been planted in our hearts, and in this way belongs to the law which is written in our hearts, and which the prophet has promised for the time of redemption (Jer. xxxi. 33). Only through the constantly repeated hearing which the writer demanded above, if this word is impressed more and more firmly, can it save their souls from that destruction which must overtake them, if the regeneration that has been begun in them is not realized in every direction. For this word of the truth, which the gospel proclaims, not only contains the message of the redemption that has appeared in Christ, but at the same time also the demand for the correct fulfilment of the divine will, as He has

which is able to save your souls. (22) But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. (23) For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding ¹ his natural face in a mirror : (24) for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. (25) But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing. (26) If any man

¹ Gr. *the face of his birth*.

shown it. For this reason the correct hearing must 22 at all times be connected with the doing of the word. This is the first thing which James develops, that we only deceive ourselves if we rest content with the mere hearing of the word and do not at the same time become doers of the same. He compares such an one with a 23 man who looks at his face, which was given him by his 24 birth, in a mirror, and then goes away and forgets how he was formed. As it does a man little good to have looked into a mirror, so the mere hearing of the word does little good. For this word, as we know, is a perfect law, because Jesus has first taught how to fulfil the Old 25 Testament law perfectly (cf. Matt. v) ; and it is one that is given to liberty, because the regenerated Christian is no longer in the servitude of his lusts, and hence can fulfil this law. But then, if he has not merely looked into it superficially, but continues in doing so, i. e. centers his mind more and more upon it, he then will not become a mere hearer, who, like the man who looked into a mirror, forgets what he has seen, but a doer, who really does what is demanded of him. He and he alone is blessed in his doing, because he knows that the word, which has produced this doing in him, can save him from destruction.

Here James returns to the fundamental evil of his readers, who thought, through passionate zeal for the 26

¹ thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. (27) Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

II My brethren, ² hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus

¹ Or, *seemeth to be*.
... *glory?*

² Or, *do ye, in accepting persons, hold the faith*

truth, to serve God, and yet in doing so only gave free rein to their tongues. But by doing this they only deceive their own hearts, which would say to them, that a service of God, which consists in being zealous for the word without at the same time curbing the exhibitions of wrath, cannot possibly please God, and accordingly does not attain the goal that we attempt to reach by such zeal. The service which alone is pleasing to God, who also is our Father, by having revealed to us His greatest love in Christ, is certainly the manifestation of charitable love over against those who need this the most. But if this service is to be unpolluted by any sin, then at the same time we must keep ourselves unpolluted from all polluting influences which approach us from the world around us, since the sinful desires of the natural man mislead us to yielding to them contrary to the will of God.

As the hearing of the word is useless without the doing, thus too the faith that is produced by the former is useless, if by the actual conduct of a man, this faith is denied. It is not possible to confess the exalted Jesus Christ as our Lord and at the same time consider external advantages, such as earthly wealth, more valuable than to belong to Him. But this the readers do, if they prefer the unbelieving Jew, because he is rich, to the poor brother in the faith, in order to win the good graces of the former. James mentions a conspicuously disgraceful case, of which he must have heard

Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. (2) For if there come into your ¹synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; (3) and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; (4) ²do ye not make distinctions ³among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? (5) Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world *to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he*

¹ Or, *assembly*. Comp. Heb. 10. 25 (Gr).
² Or, *in your own mind*.

³ Or, *are ye not divided*.

in this connection. This could have occurred nowhere 2 else than in Jewish synagogues, which the believers out of Israel still visited in order to be edified by the reading and the explanation of the Old Testament, since the rich Jew, who, from the connection, must be regarded as an unbeliever, in his pride of gold could not have visited the meetings of the Messiah believers. 3 When on such an occasion they evinced great zeal in showing him a comfortable seat, and commanded the poor brother, who has been sitting there so far, to stand up, or to be satisfied with a poorer seat, then indeed they must at bottom have begun to doubt, if really Christianity gives a higher worth than riches. Or 4 they even judge men only according to the sinful standard, whether they can help or hurt them the most. In a manner that must deeply shame them, James reminds them of this, that God put an altogether different estimate upon the poor in Israel, of whom the congre- 5 gation consisted. He did not look upon their lowly estate in worldly affairs, but to this, that in them there still remained the greatest measure of that love to Him, which, because it yet longs for His kingdom, can also alone attain it. For this reason He has chosen them, in order, after He has through the word of truth made them to be new creatures, to put them at once

promised to them that love him? (6) But ye have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? (7) Do not they blaspheme the honorable name ¹by which ye are called? (8) Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, ²Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: (9) but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted

¹ Gr. *which was called upon you* ? See Acts 15. 17.

² Lev. xix. 18.

into the possession of all the redemptive blessings which faith gives, and to appoint them to be heirs of His heavenly kingdom. While they have dishonored one of these men, whom God has so highly honored through His election, by esteeming him less than the rich man, they are certainly to remember what these rich men are, one of whom they preferred to this poor man. They are the oppressors of the poor in general, but especially of those who believe in the Messiah, as they drag these before the judges of the synagogues, 6 under whose jurisdictions the believing as well as the unbelieving Jews yet stood. They blasphemed the 7 name of Christ, who is called the Lord over them, by declaring that Jesus was a false Messiah, a liar, and the deceiver of the people.

If they flatter such a rich man, in order to win his good favor, or at any rate to lessen his hostility, they 8 indeed excuse themselves with this, that the commandment that Jesus declares as controlling all the others (Matt. xxii. 39, 40.) demands that they should love their enemies. This is true; but in this case they 9 dare not transgress the other commandment, which forbids that we shall respect a person (Deut. xvi. 19.): Hence they must not be determined in their conduct toward others by external considerations, since by the transgressions of this commandment they always become transgressors of the law. But the law is an organic whole, and, as such, the expression of the

by the law as transgressors. (10) For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is become guilty of all. (11) For he that said, 'Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. (12) So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty. (13) For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy : mercy glorieth against judgment.

¹ Ex. xx. 13 f.; Dt. v. 17 f.

divine will. And if we obey all the commandments and stumble by the transgression of a single one, we then would not have fulfilled the will of God that is 10 revealed in the law, and therefore are guilty. For He 11 who has given the seventh commandment has also given the sixth, and if men keep the one but transgress the other, they are transgressors. They are to be guided by this in their speaking and in their actions. Just 12 because they are Christians they are to know, that they cannot excuse themselves with the claim that they are bound altogether too much by their natural weaknesses and by their bad qualities to keep the whole law. For in the regeneration they have been made free from the moral servitude (cf. i. 25) and will be finally judged according to a law which has not been given to the slaves of sin but to free human beings. It is true that in the judgment we will all need the mercy of God, but according to Matt. vii. 2 the 13 manner of this judgment is exactly measured by our conduct. According to Matt. v. 7. there is nothing else than the exercise of charity which can boast, that no judgment can touch it, because in the judgment it will receive mercy. Only the unmerciful man will also experience a judgment without mercy. And yet they have failed in this very matter of mercy in their treatment of the poor brother, if they preferred the unbelieving rich man to him.

(14) What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? (15) If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, (16) and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? (17) Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. (18) ¹ Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from *thy*

¹ Or, *But some one will say.*

It is only the reverse of this that James now expounds in saying faith without being proved in works is worthless. He is not contending against dogmatical doctrines, but he is exposing the self-deception which is found in this, that we content ourselves with mere faith. What good does it do, if we appeal to the fact that we have
 14 faith without having proved this faith by works? It is impossible that faith, as such, should deliver us from destruction in the judgment, in which decision is rendered according to whether faith has been working what it should work or not. Certainly in the case of the needy, who is suffering for clothing and
 15 food, the mere invitation to warm and clothe himself
 16 will do no good, unless we give him that which is necessary for this purpose. Just as the charity, which finds its expression only in empty words, is of no use, if
 17 it does not at the same time bring help in need; thus, too, faith is worthless if it does not at the same time prove itself to be living by working what it should work. The mere conviction of the fact, that Jesus is our Lord (cf. ii. 1), is certainly in itself alone a dead conviction, if it does not bring about the fulfilment of the will of God which has been proclaimed by Him (cf. Matt. vii. 21). Now it is possible that a certain
 18 person could say: If I constantly insist only upon works, this would be something one-sided, since you, whom I am antagonizing, have faith, which, in the

works, and I by my works will show thee *my* faith. (19) Thou believest that ¹ God is one ; thou doest well : the demons also believe, and shudder. (20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren ? (21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar ? (22) ² Thou seest that faith

¹ Some ancient authorities read *there is one God*.

² Or, *Seest thou . . . perfect ?*

end, is the chief thing. But you cannot at all prove to me that you really have this faith, unless you can prove it to me from the works which are the fruit of faith. But I can prove from my works, that I do not lack faith, without which such works could not be present. It certainly follows from its very character that mere faith, as such, cannot do any good. If this character is nothing else than the confident conviction concerning a truth, it then can easily be proven, that **19** this conviction in itself cannot deliver from destruction. It certainly is a great thing to believe that there is only one God. But the demons believe this also, and yet they tremble at the divine judgment, and accordingly know full well, that their faith, as such, cannot save them from the judgment. We certainly would be deprived of all understanding, if we are not willing to see, that faith without works is idle capital which does **20** not bring the interest which it ought to bring.

All that is necessary is for us to look into the history of Abraham, our forefather. What brought it about that **21** he was declared just, i. e. pleasing to God ? Certainly this, that he brought his son Isaac as an offering upon the altar, in order to sacrifice him in accordance with the command of God. There we then see, that his faith had to co-operate with his works, in order to secure righteousness for him. For only the unchangeable conviction of the certain fulfilment of the divine promise could make it possible for him, by giving up **22**

wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; (23) and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; 'and he was called the friend of God. (24) Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. (25) And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? (26) For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

¹ Gen. xv. 6.

² Is. xli. 8; ³ Chr. xx. 7.

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- his only son unto death seemingly to make this fulfilment altogether impossible. For in the end this conviction could prove itself to be a full conviction only if it assisted him in bringing about an act such as this obedience on his part was. For only in this way
- 23 was the word of Gen. xv. 6, fulfilled. If it is stated there, that the faith of Abraham was counted to him for righteousness, this certainly was like a prophecy, which was really only fulfilled, when as a matter of fact his faith produced the work which made him pleasing to God; and he could be now called a friend of God (cf. Is. xli. 8: 2 Chron. xx. 7), because his love for God had stood the severest test. It accordingly
- 24 remains a fact, that a man is declared to be just not because of faith alone but because of works, in which faith proves itself to be alive. This appears even in the
- 25 case of Rahab, who, as is well known, was a common harlot, but because of her reception and protection of the spies, which act was a fruit of her faith in the God of Israel, was declared pleasing in the sight of God, by the fact that she was delivered in the judgment of punishment that was inflicted upon Jericho. For as the body without the soul that gives it life is dead, thus
- 26 too faith is dead, if it lacks the power of love which produces works. For this reason Christian faith too cannot save, any more than the faith of Abraham or of

III Be not many of *you* teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive ¹ heavier judgment. (2) For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word,

¹ Gr. *greater*.

Rahab, if it does not prove itself to be living through the works which it accomplishes. That this development of thought has absolutely nothing to do with the teachings of Paul, namely, that without absolute confidence in the sin-forgiving grace of God nobody can become righteous or blessed before God, and accordingly is in no contradiction to those teachings, should have been understood as a matter of course.

The Second Part of this Epistle connects with the 1 second part of the theme i. 19, namely, that of being slow to speak. If James by way of warning says that not many are to put themselves forward as teachers, because sins of the tongue so easily result, it is clear, that he here has not in mind a teaching in the congregation, in which the contents of the teaching and not perchance mistakes in speaking are the chief thing. Rather, he is thinking of those who put themselves forward as the teachers of their unbelieving fellow Jews, and want to prove their faith by improving and converting these instead of doing so by good works. He includes himself with them because it is of course his purpose in this letter to instruct and better the readers, when he reminds them, that in proportion to the greatness of the duty which a man assumes, his responsibility also grows, and that he thereby brings down upon himself all the greater punishment in case he does not fully perform this duty. For as we all sin in many ways, we are in constant danger of committing sin in these efforts to better and to convert others, since it is only an entirely perfect man who does not err even in a single word. Only he will be perfect master

the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. (3) Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also. (4) Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth. (5) So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, ¹how much wood is kindled by how small a fire ! (6) And the tongue is ²a fire : ³the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of ⁴nature, and is set on fire by

¹ Or, *how great a forest.* ² Or, *a fire, that world of iniquity: the tongue is among our members that which, &c.* ³ Or, *Or that world of iniquity, the tongue, is among our members that which, &c.* ⁴ Or, *birth.*

of himself in speaking also, who is capable of self-control in every other thing, and who, as it were, holds in strict check every organ of his body, because the sin which dwells in the heart most easily gains the mastery over the tongue and misleads us to sinful words. In the case of horses it is easily possible, by putting
 3 bits into their mouths, to control the whole body, but a man must first of all be absolute master of himself if he would control his tongue. On the other hand, we can
 4 see in the case of ships, that even the greatest of these, according to the will of the pilot, can be controlled by
 5 so small a thing as the rudder, against a mighty storm, which drives it into the opposite direction. In this way, too, the tongue is a small member and still accomplishes great results, or, as James states, it boasts of this, because all of its effects are produced by words. As also
 6 the smallest fire can set ablaze even the largest forest, thus the tongue with a single evil word can produce the most far reaching and destructive effects. There is no kind of wrong which cannot be perpetuated by the tongue, so that it seems to be the embodiment of all wrongs. It is so easy for a word-sin to end in a sin of action ; because a sin, to which we yield so far as to permit it to obtain control over the tongue, easily gains

¹hell. (7) For every ²kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed and hath been tamed ³by ⁴'mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; *it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison.* (9) Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God: (10) out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things

¹ Gr. *Gehenna*.² Gr. *nature*.³ Or, *unto*.⁴ Gr. *the human nature*.

the mastery also of the other members of the body and forces them into its guilt-polluted service. In this way it can be said that the tongue sets the wheel on fire which our birth has put into motion, since by the restless movement of the human life the fire of sin which has once been enkindled spreads farther and farther. But the tongue itself is set on fire from hell, where the fire of divine wrath burns eternally: for these destructive effects of the sins of the tongue are at the same time the judgment of God over them.

Once again James returns to the statement, how hard it is to curb the tongue. That which human nature ⁷ can succeed in doing over against all kinds of animals, ⁸ it does not succeed in accomplishing in its own case; for this reason the tongue is such a restless evil. Even if we have once brought it to speak something good and thereby accomplish blessings, it at once again begins to utter its death-bringing poison. And only here it becomes clear, what James wants to say with his terribly earnest admonition against the sins of the tongue. It must have occurred, in their zeal for the ⁹ improvement and better instruction that some had pro- ¹⁰ nounced a curse upon the incapacity to receive this on the part of those who were not willing to be converted. With the same tongue, with which they had just now been praising God as the Father, who had become such to us in Christ, they curse men who certainly have been made after His image (cf. Gen. i. 26). This is not

III, 11-15] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

ought not so to be. (11) Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet *water* and bitter? (12) can a fig tree my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither can salt water yield sweet.

(13) Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. (14) But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. (15) This wisdom is not a

only sinful, but to the highest degree is contrary to nature. It is as though a fountain would send forth the
11 sweet and the bitter out of one and the same opening;
12 as though one plant, by the side of its own fruit, would also produce those of another, or that even salty water would produce sweet.

18 The readers will answer that, through the gospel they have received the true wisdom and the insight into the one thing that is necessary. They think they must prove themselves to be such and hence try to instruct and convert the unbelievers. James states moreover, that there is yet another and better way of proving their wisdom and insight, namely, in showing by a beautiful walk, that is pleasing to all, of what kind the works of a wise and a prudent man are. The fundamental virtue of such a walk will then be that gentleness which is characteristic of all wisdom and which is the opposite of all angry and passionate zeal. Now we see why in James i. 19, he added to the demand to be
14 slow in speaking that also of being slow to anger. For the manner in which they tried to teach and to convert, showed, that in their hearts there was a bitter tasting and hence a passionate zeal, the opposite of what pleases others, and also the quarrelsomeness, which is concerned not about the thing itself but about gaining one's own point. But in this case boasting of
15 their wisdom was a lie against the truth, since a wis-

wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, ¹ sensual, ² devilish. (16) For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. (17) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without ³ variance, without hypocrisy. (18) And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace ⁴ for them that make peace.

¹ Or, *natural*. Or, *animal*. ² Gr. *demoniacal*.
³ Or, *doubtfulness*. Or, *partiality*. ⁴ Or, *by*.

dom that is joined to such a state of mind certainly is not a wisdom that has come from above, for which we are to ask the Spirit (i. 5), but is a wisdom that belongs to the earth, coming from the same low elements as our personality, and in kind is even devilish. For where passionate zeal and quarrelsomeness are present, there 16 will at all times be an instability, which, because it is under the control of all kinds of sinful motives, never maintains the same kind of conduct, and hence cannot possibly show to others the proper way, but rather itself shows all kinds of wrong-doing, which is directly 17 antagonistic to such correct conduct. On the other hand, the wisdom which really comes from above is, first of all, free of all impure motives. But this, as a matter of course, brings other qualities with it. It is peacefully inclined and accordingly avoids all contentions; it is fair-minded and gentle in its judgment of the faults of others; it is easily convinced, if it is itself mistaken, in the matter in which it asserts itself; it is full of mercy, which itself shows to be the fundamental Christian virtue by its own example in the good fruits that it produces; it is sure of itself and accordingly needs not by its zeal to stifle the doubt as to itself; it is without hypocrisy, because it not merely claims to know the right way and in reality does not itself know 18 it. Only such a wisdom attains its purpose. For the fruit of a condition pleasing to God in others is some-

IV Whence *come* wars and whence *come* fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your pleasures that war in your members? (2) Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and ¹ covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. (3) Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that

¹ Gr. are *jealous*.

thing which passionate zeal does not succeed in accomplishing, is sown only if we proclaim the word of truth in a peaceful state of mind. But this can be done only by those who everywhere establish peace, and do not by passionate zeal and quarrelsomeness disturb this peace.

- The exposition of James becomes a sharp criticism
- 1 in dealing with the question as to the real source of the contentions and controversies, which the passionate zeal of the readers have aroused between themselves and the unbelieving portion of their people. He finds this source in the unsatisfied longing for sensual enjoyments. They see that their fellow Jews, notwithstanding their unbelief, enjoy wealth and prosperity; and the unconscious envy on this account impels them to this passionate zeal, since the lust for similar possessions, that has been aroused in them, makes use of their members, and principally of the tongue, in order to attack those who are worse than they are and yet are
 - 2 better situated. All the more is this the case, because all their desiring does not attain its object. Of course through their anger also, which according to the word of the Lord (Matt. v. 21-22) James puts on a level with murder, they cannot get what they want. But all the more vehement their contests and their quarrels with the unbelieving Jews become. But the real reason why they do not possess what they want, certainly is to be found in this, that they do not ask God for it;
 - 3 or if they pray, they do not do this in the right way. For a prayer for what does not serve the satisfaction

ye may spend it in your pleasures. (4) Ye ¹ adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God. (5) Or think ye that the scripture ² speaketh in vain? ³ Doth the spirit which ⁴ he made to dwell in us long unto envying? (6) But he giveth ⁵ more grace. Wherefore *the scripture* saith, ⁶ God resisteth the proud, but

¹ That is, who break your marriage vow to God. ² Or, saith in vain.
³ Or, The Spirit which he made to dwell in us he yearneth for even unto jealous envy. Comp. Jer. 3. 14; Hos. 2. 19 f. Or, That Spirit which he made to dwell in us yearneth for us even unto jealous envy. ⁴ Some ancient authorities read dwelleth in us. ⁵ Gr. a greater grace. ⁶ Prov. iii. 34.

of our real wants but is used for the gratification of sinful lusts, cannot receive what it asks for. After the manner of the Old Testament, James upbraids them as adulteresses, who have broken their vows of fidelity to 4 God, because they have turned their love away from God and bestowed it upon earthly possessions and enjoyments. Do they not know, that according to Matt. vi. 24, such love is enmity to God? He who voluntarily puts himself under the alternative of this word of the Lord, such a person is an enemy of God, whether he wants to be such or not. They are to know that the Scriptures do not speak empty words, when they make this alternative so sharp. But before James quotes 5 the passage of the Scriptures, which he has in mind, he states, that God, who speaks in the Scriptures, is jealous in asking of us for the spirit whom He has given us, and whose undivided love accordingly should belong to Him. True, the more He demands the more He also 6 gives, as is stated by Prov. iii. 34, which passage he has in mind. Now it is true that this passage does not speak of the love to the world and of the love to God, but of the pride which opposes God and of the humility which God gives. But in the love for the world James sees pride over against God, because man thinks he knows better what is good for him than God does, who denies to him earthly possessions; while the humble man is

giveth grace to the humble. (7) Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. (9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.

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- content with that which God gives him for the simple reason that he loves God better than all earthly possessions. It is a violation of the proper subjection to God, if the poor man, who is in an oppressed condition, is driven on by the love for the world to seek for a better lot. It is the Devil who tempts him to live contrary to his duty; and it is only necessary for him to offer determined resistance, and the Devil will give up all attempts of this kind. If he lacks the power for this, it is only necessary for him to approach God in prayer, and His help will not fail the faithful petitioner. Of course, they must lift up clean hands to Him, which are not polluted by sinful attacks upon the possessions of the neighbor; and they must have hearts, which are entirely dedicated to God and are not divided between love to God and love to the world, as is the case with those, who, as it were, carry two souls in their hearts.
- 9 Instead then of becoming so passionately zealous in the case of the unbelievers, they should rather feel themselves broken inwardly, and lament and weep on account of their own condition that is yet so sinful. In such sadness of condition, their triumphant joy on account of their Christian state, with which they try to make an impression of their superiority upon the others, will be converted into sadness and into dejection.
- 10 Only after they have humiliated themselves before God, will God raise them to the high condition of the Chris-

- (11) Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law : but if thou judgest the law, thou are not a doer of the law, but a judge. (12) One *only* is the lawgiver and judge, *even* he who is able to save and to destroy : but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor ? (13) Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go
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tian state, of which James speaks in i. 9. They are 11 not to withdraw themselves from such earnest repentance by each one putting the blame upon the other, just as the quarrels of the unbelieving fellow Jews have been increased by these discussions so full of hatred, and in this way to condemn the Christian brother on account of unjust actions of which he accuses him. For thereby they only blame and condemn the law of Jesus in Matt. vii. 1, as though this were too strict or unjust. Instead then of fulfilling the commandment they undertake to pass upon it as judges. 12 And yet only that one can be Lawgiver and Judge, who at the same time has the power to deliver from, or over to, destruction and this is Christ, who has given this law. For this reason James, in conclusion, asks the readers to consider who he is, that arrogates to himself the right to judge his neighbor, be he a Christian brother or an unbeliever.

The Third Part of the letter returns to the contrast between the unbelieving rich and the believing poor, which we found already in i. 9, 10 ; ii. 5 sqq. In this place it becomes perfectly clear, that James presupposes that all the terribly earnest words of warning addressed to the former, especially if these should reach their ears through the readers of this letter, will not fail to make an impression on them. Up to this point he has been admonishing his fellow-believers, who were guilty of 13 an improper conduct over against the others ; but now

into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain : (14) whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. (15) ¹For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. (16) But now ye glory in your vauntings : all such glorying is evil. (17) To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

V Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. (2) Your riches are corrupted, and

¹ Gr. *instead of your saying*.

he turns to the rich and proud trading Jews and describes the boastful arrogance with which they plan their journeys. All they need is to determine the day and the hour for their departure, and also the place and time of their sojourn in foreign parts; that they will
 14 there succeed in profitable trading is a matter of course. But in this, they forget altogether, what the actual facts are in reference to their life and the future; for our life is surely as fleeting as smoke, which disappears as
 15 rapidly as it came. They certainly should say: If it
 16 shall have been the Lord's will, then we will not only
 17 yet be living, but we will also undertake this or that thing. Instead of this, they only boast of themselves in their high words; and all self-laudation of this kind is certainly evil. This even those unbelievers know very well from the Old Testament, and they know how we are to speak concerning our plans in the presence of God; and because they know this, and do not do it, it is a sin for them. Instead of such boastful words they rather should weep and lament on account of the de-
 1 structive blows which will strike them and which already are at the point of coming, because the judgment is at hand. The writer no longer speaks of an admonition to repentance; for they have remained unbelievers because
 2 they are not willing to repent. In old prophetic manner

your garments are moth-eaten. (3) Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony¹ against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. (4) Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your field, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. (5) Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. (6) Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous *one*; he doth not resist you.

¹ Or, unto.

James sees the judgment as already at hand, which first of all destroys all their riches, and thereby only 3 shows them, that their own destruction will now also come. The pictures, which in part are contrary to all reality, such as the rotting wealth, the rust of precious metals, or the fire which devours their fleshy parts, are intended to show, that the author is thinking here of the symbols of a terrible judgment. The fact that, in such days as were the last ones which according to prophecy must bring this judgment, they have collected treasures, shows the full folly of these rich men, just as the curtailment of the wages of the poor does, which cries to 4 heaven, as these men have in the sweat of the brow mowed their fields, shows their guilt. What does all their feasting and banqueting on earth, whereby they satisfy their souls, amount to but a fattening of animals at a time when the day for slaughtering is already at 5 hand? But what their own guilt is, we read in ii. 6. 6 They have condemned, and then brought to his death, the just one, which in comparison to them the believing Jew was. The fact that the former, according to Matt. v. 39, endures all the assaults of his enemies without resistance, more than anything else calls down the wrath of God upon these evil-doers. With this the transition has been made from the threats uttered

(7) Be patient therefore, brethren, until the ¹ coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until ² it receive the early and latter rain. (8) Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the ¹ coming of the Lord is at hand. (9) Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the doors. (10) Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. (11) Behold, we call them

¹ Gr. *presence*.

² Or, *he*.

against the rich to the exhortation for the poor believers.

- 7 If the condemnation of their oppressors is so certain, then the Christian brethren are to persevere in waiting until the return of the Lord brings the judgment. For a husbandman must wait until the fruit of the field has received the early rain, with which the rainy season begins, or the late rains with which it ends, since the fruit cannot ripen sooner, no matter how impatient he may be to secure his precious harvest. They are therefore to hold out patiently and to make firm the heart, which is so easily inclined to vacillate, because
- 8 the return of the Lord is near at hand. James again returns to the thought, that the Christian brethren are
- 9 not to blame each other, one charging the other with having caused or increased (cf. iv. 11) the bad relations that existed between them and the unbelievers of their people, whereby they only bring condemnation upon themselves. The Judge, who is already standing at the door (cf. Matt. xxiv. 33), will certainly decide soon
- 10 enough who is to be blamed for this. As the Lord Himself does, in Matt. v. 12, so James here refers to the prophets, who spoke by the authority of God, and yet were compelled to endure so much suffering, but who bore this patiently. We certainly esteem those blessed
- 11 who have patiently endured to the end (cf. i. 12). How

blessed that endured : ye have heard of the ¹patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.

(12) But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath : but ²let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay ; that ye fall not under judgment.

(18) Is any among you suffering ? let him pray. Is any

¹ Or, *endurance*

² Or, *let yours be the yea, yea, and the nay, nay.* Comp. Mt. 5, 37.

often have they in the synagogue heard read the story of Job, which speaks of such patience ; but they have also seen the end in this story, which God brought about finally, according to the great goodness of His heart and His mercy, in order to reward the pious sufferer. Only this one thing they must hold fast to, they must not undertake to help themselves in order to put a speedier end to their sufferings. If they ¹² with solemn oaths insist upon their claims to innocence, when they appeal to heaven and earth as witnesses for the truth of the gospel, in which they have learned to believe, they may hope thereby to escape human courts, but they thereby become the subjects of judgment of Christ, who, in Matt. v. 34 sqq., has forbidden all kinds of oaths. If every assertion of theirs, be it positive or negative, is made without a reservation, and is not based on any deception, then they would not need such special affirmations.

In the final exhortation, he passes from the common ¹³ sufferings of the readers to the sufferings which the individuals are called upon to endure in their personal life. For this is but one help, and that is prayer. But it is not only necessity that should teach us to pray. If we are in good spirits, because no trouble is opposing us, and no unfulfilled wish yet urges us on to prayer, then we are to sing songs of praise. In case of

V, 14-17] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

cheerful? let him sing praise. (14) Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, ¹ anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; (15) and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. (16) Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. (17) Elijah was a man of like ² passions with us, and he prayed ³ fervently that it might not rain: and it rained

¹ Or, *having anointed*.

² Or, *nature*.

³ Gr. *with prayer*.

- sickness, they are to call the elders of the congregation, who, since, as a matter of course, the most worthy and mature are chosen, can be expected to possess also, to the greatest degree, the power of believing prayer,
- 14 which, therefore, too, can expect to be heard. These shall, as the Lord once commanded His disciples, apply the simplest remedy, and anoint the sick man with oil (cf. Mark vi. 13), praying for the wonderful help of God for him. Not the anointing with oil, nor any special miraculous gifts of these congregational
- 15 officers, but the believing prayer, will deliver the sick man from death; and the Lord, at whose command they do this, will raise him up from his bed of sickness. Even in case he has brought this sickness upon himself through his sinful life, the penitent man, on account of their intercession, will receive forgive-
- 16 ness. But every believing brother can render this service to the other, if the latter only sincerely confesses his sins, and the former, through his intercession, then secures the healing for him, because the effect of itself disappears if the cause has been removed through the forgiveness of sin, for which he petitioned. The prayer of a man who is pleasing to God accomplishes much, if it becomes effective through the power which
- 17 it possesses. This we see from the history of Elijah,

not on the earth for three years and six months. (18) And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

(19) My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 ¹ let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *know ye*.

who also was a man of the same kind as we are; but, 18 through his prayer, he closed the heavens, and again opened them as we read in 1 Kings, xvii. 18. The period during which rain was not permitted to fall, is described as a time of misfortune (cf. already Luke iv. 25), not according to its historical limitation, but after the manner of prophecy (cf. Apoc. xi. 23).

The letter closes with the intimation, that the whole Epistle is a warning against false zeal for the conversion of others. But there is also a right zeal for this purpose, and it has been the object of James in this letter, as they know, to correct the mistakes of the readers and to cause them to turn to the right way. Accordingly the conclusion contains the justification of the letter and the expression of his good wishes for the readers. If a person wanders away from the truth of the gospel, which demands the fulfilment of the divine will, and if 19 they are really successful in convincing him of the error of his conduct, and to bring him back again, then they have done an excellent work. For they will have 20 saved a soul from the death to which the sinner on account of his sins must surely have fallen a victim; and they will bring it about, that in consequence of his repentance, also a multitude of sins are in grace covered in the eyes of God, as Prov. x. 12, says. For the Epistle of James has this sole end in view, and this and nothing else he asks and begs for his readers.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

PETER

I Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (2) according to the foreknowledge of

- 1 The Apostle Peter in the address describes his readers in general according to that which their Christian calling upon earth brings with it, namely, as those who, because they have been elected to the heavenly consummation, here upon earth feel themselves as strangers. But he also states where these readers are to be found. They belong to the Jews who live scattered in different provinces of Asia Minor and are accordingly
- 2 converts from among Israel. For this very reason Peter ascribes their election to the fatherly love of God, who had in times past selected Israel as His son and as His possession, and for this reason had also known beforehand, that the members of His people would attain to the complete possession of redemption which has been prepared for them in heaven. But not all do this. For in the time of grace, which has now begun, only those can partake of the promises of Israel, who have separated themselves from the nation, which as a whole has remained in its unbelief, and who have through the gift of the Holy Ghost been especially consecrated to be His property. For this reason the readers are elected in the spiritual consecration of holy baptism. And as Israel of old, as a people, when the Old Covenant was being concluded, bound themselves to obedience to their God and were sprinkled

God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ : Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

(3) Blessed be ¹the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

¹ Or, *God and the Father*. See Rom. 15. 6 marg.

with the blood of the sacrifice in order to be able to appear without sin before their God in the communion of the covenant (Ex. xxiv. 7-8), thus too the Israel of the New Covenant has been elected to obedience to God, as is befitting those who are consecrated to be His property. It is true that this obedience will be as little perfect as it was in the old Israel. But those who have in faith accepted redemption, know too that they are elected also to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, which at all times cleanses those consecrated to God from all pollution of sin, and accordingly at the end of time makes them participants in His heavenly communion. For this reason the Apostle begins by wishing the readers a constant increase in the divine grace, which descends upon them as the elect, and in redemption, which this grace has prepared for them in Christ. For as they owe the redemption, which they have already received in their Christian state, to this divine gift of grace, it can only be increased for them through a constant bestowal of new gifts of this grace.

The Epistle begins by praising God, who, according 8 to Ps. ii. 7, has exalted His son Jesus by raising Him from the dead to be our Lord and Messiah. For in this way He has begotten us, i. e. all believers out of Israel, to whom the Apostle also belongs, anew, unto a life of hope. It is true, that Israel possessed this hope from the beginning ; but as He was still wanting who, according to the promise was to fulfil it, this was a dead hope and ineffectual for religious and moral life. And even when in Jesus He had appeared who was to

Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) who

fulfil all prophecies, it seemed as though this fulfilment was to be frustrated since they nailed Him to the cross and laid Him in a tomb. But by the resurrection from the death of this Jesus, who had now been exalted to be the Messiah, the believers out of Israel have been born again to a living hope, which is able to produce a new life in them. For the Lord, who has been exalted by His resurrection, will most certainly
4 bring about the consummation of redemption. Therein believing Israel has possession of the Land of Promise that was once promised to them, which, different from the Canaan that was once given them, is not subjected to transitoriness, and is no longer polluted by sin, and is even left untouched by the passing change of growth and decay, because it is reserved for them in heaven. For the very reason that their real home is henceforth to be there, they feel themselves as strangers upon
5 earth. But because they have been elected for this possession, they know at the same time that, under God's protection and providence, they are guarded against all enemies, who would tear this possession from them. This could indeed be torn away from them only if they would desert the faith which they have found in Christ, their Lord and the Mediator of their redemption. But by this divine providence they are protected in trusting in the final deliverance from eternal destruction, which deliverance has already been earned for them by their Lord and Saviour, and is at every moment ready to be revealed as soon as the end of the time of the redemption that has already begun is at hand.

I PETER

[I, 6-8

by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold ¹ trials, (7) that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ: (8) whom

¹ Or, *temptation*.

The exultant joy, which because of this regeneration 6 fills them with a living hope, cannot be disturbed even by the trials and sufferings of the present time. It indeed can occur, should this take place in accordance with the counsel of God, that they are for a short time to be subjected to sorrow amid the temptations of all kinds, such as afflict the believers at times. But the 7 purposes of God, when He permits these things to come over them, is only to try their faith. Already in the Old Testament, the trial by sufferings is often compared with the test of gold by fire (cf. Ps. lxvii. 10; Prov. xvii. 3). If then gold, which is also perishable, as are all earthly things, is tested by fire, how much more precious will the genuine character of faith turn out to be if it stands the test of such fire of adversity? For this is to serve the purpose, that he who thus has been tried, when Christ at His return is to be revealed as the Judge, shall receive praise from Him and be rewarded with glory and honor. The prospect of this must fill them with 8 exultant joy, because they now already love the coming Judge as their Saviour, whom they yet have never seen, just as the Apostle had learned to love Him in His earthly career and in his personal associations with Him. For they put their entire confidence in Him, although He for the present has been withdrawn from their eyes through His exaltation to the right hand of God. But this joy, which is only increased by the trials of their faith in sufferings, instead of being diminished,

not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and ¹ full of glory: (9) receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls. (10) Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that *should come* unto you: (11) searching what *time* or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings ² of Christ, and the glories that should follow them.

¹ Gr. *glorified*.² Gr. *unto*.

will become unutterable, and as it were, a reflection of
9 the light of their future glory, because they are now sure of attaining the goal toward which their redemptive confidence is directed, namely, the deliverance of their souls from eternal destruction, which brings with it their complete salvation in the consummation of redemption.

10 True, this deliverance is only to take place in the future. But they have great advantages in comparison with even the greatest of the Old Covenant. In those times there were prophets, who had been privileged to prophecy concerning the proof of divine grace that had been destined for Israel, and accordingly also knew of the final deliverance to which this was to lead. But the prophets did not know when and how this deliverance was to take place. For this reason they were compelled, as Daniel once was (cf. ix. 2-3;
11 23 sqq.), to hunt and search for the time, which perchance they could recognize only by certain signs, to which all that which the Spirit spoke to them referred. It is true that this Spirit, whom afterwards Christ received in His baptism for His mission, already beforehand predicted to them the sufferings that He was destined to endure, as also the glorification that would follow. But only so much was made manifest to them, that they, by predicting these things, during the course

I PETER

[I, 12-13]

(12) To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that ¹preached the gospel unto you ²by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into.

(13) Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober

¹ Gr. *brought good tidings.* Comp. Mt. 11. 5. ² Gr. *in.*

of which the consummation of redemption was to take place, did not do themselves or their contemporaries a favor, as these were not to live to see these things; but ¹² they helped the present generation, which has lived to see the coming of the time of salvation. For to the readers these sufferings and the glorification of Christ are proclaimed as something that has already occurred, by men who have brought them this message of joy, not through their own power and wisdom, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, who has been sent from heaven and for that reason proves to them that these things are absolutely true. And what has in this way been proclaimed to them as the fulfilment of what was promised, is already so great and so glorious, that even such beings as are the angels desire to gaze down into it. For this reason the hope which has been confirmed by these divine redemptive acts and the fulfilment of which has then been shown to be near at hand, must be a living hope for them and even a source of new life, such as their prophets themselves did not yet possess.

As a sequel to the thanksgiving of the introduction, is added the admonition, that they should arouse them- ¹³ selves spiritually, which is figuratively described as a spiritual girding up of the loins (cf. Luke xii. 35). Thereby they are to preserve spiritual sobriety, which with clearness of vision keeps in mind whatever may be necessary for their situation. Only in this way will they be able in all trials to maintain the hope that has been

and set your hope perfectly on the grace that ¹is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ ; (14) as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in *the time of* your ignorance : (15) but ²like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living ; (16) because it is written, ³Ye shall be

¹ Gr. *is being brought*.

² Or, *like the Holy One who called you*.

³ Lev. xi. 44 f. : xix. 2 ; xx. 7.

- awakened in them and in a perfect way base it on the manifestation of divine grace, which is already offered them in the facts of redemption that are now preached to them. For already the first appearance of Jesus Christ was a revelation of His Messianic glory, and accordingly a prelude to and a guarantee of the final glory which is yet to come. But to what this hope impels is discussed by the First Chief Part of this
- 14 letter, in the admonition to a godly conversation. It is befitting those children who are characterized by obedience, since they have become such by their election, that they should not permit themselves to be determined in the conduct of their life by the lusts of the natural man. This was certainly inexcusable for them, because the will of God had been revealed in the law, as they had contented themselves with an external fulfilment of the law, such as Jesus had antagonized in the Sermon on the Mount, and who had in this way not learned to know the true kernel of this will, and
- 15 had scarcely differed in their conduct from the heathen
- 16 around them. But now, since the holy God, i. e., He who is absolutely separated from all impurity, has called them in grace to be His children, it is necessary that they as His children should be like unto Him and to conform to Him in all their moral activity, as is demanded already by the Old Testament fundamental law in Lev. xi. 44, the true significance of which they in their ignorance had formerly failed to recognize.

holy ; for I am holy. (17) And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear : (18) knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers ; (19) but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, *even the blood of*

Nor are they to think, that now, since they can call 17 upon God as their Father, He, on account of His love for them, would condone their transgressions. For their Father is the impartial judge, who examines the works done by each one and considers nothing else that might speak in their favor. For which reason they are to use the time, in which they yet as guests must continue to be in a world that is still strange to them and for which reason they will in many cases yet be tempted by sin, in the constant fear of the Judge, who will afterwards ask, how they had obeyed His fundamental law. Nor can they excuse themselves by pleading, that the power of sin, by which they have been bound, is 18 too strong for them. Purposely this sin is here not described as heathen depravity or as idolatry, from which even the Jews in the Diaspora abstained, but as a manner of life, such as the fathers from the beginning had entered upon, when they essayed by a purely external obedience to the law to gain the good pleasure of God, which conduct naturally could never gain its object. As they know, they have been bought free from the servitude of this vain walk, and that too not by any price, such as is paid for things that pass away, even if these were the most costly, such as gold and silver. For Christ has purchased them, at no less a price than His own blood, from this servitude,—the blood of an innocent and 19 patiently suffering Lamb, as the Messiah is described to be in Is. liii. 7 ; which was of immeasurably greater

Christ: (20) who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, (21) who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God. (22) Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience unto the truth in unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another ¹from the heart fer-

¹ Many ancient authorities read *from a clean heart*. Comp. 1 Tim. 1, 5.

- 20 value. As such a Saviour Christ was indeed selected by God already before the foundation of the world, but as such He has been made known only to them, who have lived to see the last times which begins with the sending of Christ at the beginning of His redemptive work, so that the Apostle can appeal to their knowledge concerning redemption. For in contrast to all other Jews, 21 who together with them believed on the one God, they believe through Christ on Him as the one who, by raising Christ from the dead and granting Him the full divine glory at His right hand, has made certain the completion of the work of redemption which He has begun. In this way their confidence in redemption also becomes a living hope in the consummation of redemption, which must necessarily impel them, by a holy walk in the fear of God, to see to this, that they do not make this hope impossible, by any actions of their own.

- After discussing the correct conduct of the children 22 toward their Father, the Apostle speaks of the correct deportment of the children to each other, i. e. of brotherly love. This can only be free of hypocrisy, if their souls, being consecrated to God, in harmony with the holy will of God, are cleansed from all selfishness which by nature adheres to them. But this must have taken place in their case, as the children of obedience, in the obedience to that truth which has been revealed to them in the word of God. Only in this case

vently : (23) having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of ¹ God, which liveth and abideth. (24) For,

² All flesh is grass,
And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass.
The grass withereth and the flower falleth :

(25) But the ³ word of the Lord abideth for ever.
And this is the ⁴ word of good tidings which was ⁵ preached unto you.

II Putting away therefore all ⁶ wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

¹ Or, *God who liveth*. Comp. Dan. 6. 26.

⁴ Gr. *brought good tidings*. Comp. Mt. 11. 5.

² Is. xl. 6. ff.

⁵ Or, *malice*.

³ Gr. *saying*.

1 Cor. 14. 20.

can they heartily love each other in a permanent glow of affection. But this is to be expected of them, because in their regeneration they have been begotten again, not of perishable seed such as that of man is, but through that which cannot perish and which assures such permanence. Described without a figure, this regeneration has been accomplished through the living word of God which is efficacious and permanently active, as this word is described in the passage (Is. xl. 6, 7), 23 which is well known to the readers and is of decisive significance. But a word of God, such as the Scripture describes in these statements, is that word which has 25 come to them as the message of great joy. Through the living and permanent God's word of the gospel they have then been born again to such an abiding brotherly love, and they accordingly cannot excuse themselves if this love is not present. But, rather, 1 they must have laid aside whatever is contrary to such unfeigned brotherly love, such as all evil-mindedness, which hides itself in any deception and deceit, all forms of hypocrisy, all agitations of jealousy and envy and the various kinds of slander, which come from this source. But the life which has been begotten in the regeneration must also be nourished ; and as they, be-

(2) as newborn babes, long for the ¹spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; (3) if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: (4) unto whom com-

¹ Gr. *belonging to the reason.* Comp. Rom. 12. 1.

2 cause they had only been recently converted, can yet be compared with little children, their food is here termed milk. But this can be pure and unadulterated only if it comes from the same word through which the readers have been born again. And for this food they must have a longing as a child has for its mother's milk, so that their newly begotten life may be developed farther toward the goal of redemption, whereas the natural man only with the impure motive of selfishness seeks to harm the neighbor. The sustenance of life, which 3 is offered them in the word, is, however, nothing else than the Lord Himself, whose sinless life, whose sin-atoning death, and whose return to the judgment had been there proclaimed to them. And if they however, as cannot be doubted, in order to speak with the words of Ps. xxxiv. 8, have tasted how sweet and palatable the food is which is offered to them in the proclamation concerning Christ, and thereby in Christ Himself, how can they then otherwise than continually long for this food?

With this the Apostle changes the figure; for the partaking of the food which is offered in the word is in reality nothing else than approaching again and again to the Christ who is proclaimed thereby and permitting 4 Him to influence them. For the congregation can be united together in brotherly love only if they, like a building, consist entirely of individual stones, which are joined together and are most closely connected with one corner and foundation stone. But Christ is such a stone, and that, too, a living stone, with whom they also as living stones can enter into a spiritual, living, and real

ing, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, ¹precious, (5) ye also, as living stones, are built up ²a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (6) Because it is contained in ³scripture,

⁴Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, ¹precious :
And he that believeth on ⁵him shall not be put to shame.

¹ Or, *honorable*.
² Or, *a scripture*.

³ Or, *a spiritual house for a holy priesthood*.
⁴ Is. xxviii. 16. ⁵ Or, *it*.

union. Here already the Apostle is indeed compelled to remind the believers out of Israel that this stone had once been rejected by men, namely, by their nation. But this does not prevent them from approaching Him, since according to the judgment of God He is a chosen and precious stone. For only in the closest communion ⁵ with Him can they, too, be built up into a spiritual building such as the congregation is, i. e. one that has been constructed through the spiritual communion with Him. Such a building, then, as a matter of course, as was the case with the temple, in which God alone was worshipped, is intended for a sacred Priesthood, which now consists of all members of the congregation. But in this building they do not offer sacrifices, such as the priests of the Old Covenant did in the temple, but the spiritual sacrifices that are truly acceptable to God, which consist in the manifestation of brotherly love. Of this, however, they can be made capable only through Christ; for which reason they are at all times to approach Him, and in the union with Him that is developed in His activity, are, together with Him, to strive for the completion of their life as members of a community.

In Is. xxviii. 16, has been described this chosen and precious corner-stone which God intended to lay in Zion. But in this passage it is added, that he who ⁶ puts his trust in it is not to be put to shame. For this

(7) ¹ For you therefore that believe is the ² preciousness : but for such as disbelieve,

³ The stone which the builders rejected,

The same was made the head of the corner ;

(8) and,

⁴ A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence ;

⁵ for they ⁶ stumble at the word, being disobedient : whereunto also they were appointed. (9) But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who

¹ Or, *in your sight*.

² Or, *honor*.

³ Ps. cxviii. 22.

⁴ Is. viii. 14.

⁵ Gr. *who*.

⁶ Or, *stumble, being disobedient to the word*.

7 reason only they, the believers from among Israel, are to have the honor in the communion with Him, which they find in faith, to be built up into such a temple, in which they serve God as a holy priesthood. But for the unbelieving portion of Israel, as is now stated expressly with the words from Ps. cxviii. 22, the stone which once the builders, i. e. the leaders of the people of Israel, have rejected, will nevertheless become a corner-stone, because they cannot with their unbelief prevent this. However, in their case, this stone, according to Is. viii. 14, becomes also a stone upon which they will stumble and over which they will fall, because, by His actual elevation to the position of a corner-stone, it is made apparent how terrible a sin their
8 unbelief is. For, from the very fact that they refuse to believe the preaching concerning Christ, which this elevation demands, they are thereby brought to fall, since this it is that God has determined for them as a punishment for their unbelief. But in this case it is only the readers, the believers out of Israel, in whom the ideal of the Old Testament people of God
9 will be realized. They are the chosen generation (cf. Is. xliii. 20), a priesthood serving God as their King (cf. Ex. xix. 6), a holy nation, a people chosen to be the property of God (cf. Mal. iii. 17), which, according to

called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (10) who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

(11) Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to

Is. xliii. 21, has the mission of proclaiming the glorious attributes of God, as the one who has called them from the darkness of misery to the wonderful light of His salvation, and glorifying Him unto all the world. In them is fulfilled what in Hos. ii. 25 is written concerning the people of God who were formerly rejected on account of this sin, but who in the age of redemption had again 10 been taken back in grace. For, before their conversion, they, too, had been led, by their life among the heathen, to become deeply involved in the sins of the Gentiles; but in Christ, not only has God accepted them in grace, but they, and they alone, are those in whom all the promises of their nation are to be fulfilled.

The Second Principal Part of the Epistle discusses 11 the relation of the readers to the Gentile world around them, in the midst of whom they live. As citizens of the kingdom of heaven they really do not any longer belong to this world, but as pilgrims they merely enjoy the privileges of hospitality among a foreign people; and are like the strangers, who only for the time being have taken lodging at a place. As such they must not accept the customs of life that are in vogue around them. If people here obey the lusts that have their origin in the flesh, without thinking that these are evil, they, on their part, must abstain from these, because they know that these lusts are in constant antagonism to their souls, which are destined for their heavenly possession; and these evil desires would win their souls again for themselves, and thus bring them to destruction, out of which they were delivered by the

abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul ; (12) having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles ; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

(13) Be subject to every ¹ ordinance of man for the Lord's sake : whether it be to the king, as supreme ; (14) or unto governors, as sent ² by him for vengeance on evil-doers and

¹ Gr. *creation*.

² Gr. *through*.

grace of God. But they fulfil also a higher mission by this, in opposition to the world which is about them, since it is befitting not only not to give any offense to those among whom we live as guests, but rather
 12 to bring them blessings. But this they can do only if they lead their life among the Gentiles in a way so excellent that it will compel these to be pleased with them. Even if the people slander them as evil-doers, the time will nevertheless come when God will with His grace visit the Gentiles also, by opening their eyes to the walk of the believers. This they will, upon close inspection, be compelled to recognize as a devotion to good works, which only God can work in them. If they glorify God for this, then they already take the first step toward gaining that faith which has effected such work in the believers from among Israel. This hope takes us back to an early period of the Christian congregational life, when the new spirit of religion manifested by the Jews who had become believers, was still much misinterpreted by the Gentiles.

13 The Apostle applies these entirely general principles,
 14 first of all, to the attitude of the believers toward the government. It is true that the latter is a human institution, to which, however, they are to submit for God's sake, as He demands such subjection, whether this government has appointed an emperor as the absolute ruler, or a governor is appointed by him to execute right

I PETER

[II, 15-17]

for praise to them that do well. (15) For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: (16) as free, and not ¹using your freedom for a cloak of ²wickedness, but as bondservants of God. (17) Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

¹ Gr. *having*.

² Or, *malice*. 1 Cor. 14. 20.

and the laws in his name by the punishment of evil-doers and by rewarding those who do good. Accordingly, then, the Gentile government had not yet assumed a hostile attitude against the Messiah-believing Jews. Such subordination under the government was 15 demanded by the will of God, because only thus by doing good could they silence the slanders which are based on the fact that foolish people were not yet able to judge of their behavior and its real character. It is, indeed, true 16 that they, as the servants of God, are free from all human compulsion, as Israel has from the beginning recognized no Lord over them other than God Himself. But this liberty they dare not use as a cloak of evilmindedness, from which all evil actions flow. But rather because they are the servants of God, they must, in perfect liberty, and not yielding to external forces, but because it is God's will, prove their doing good by their subordination to the government. The latter certainly does 17 not demand anything else than showing the emperor the honor due him, just as they are to show every one the proper respect which he has a right to claim on account of his station and his prominence, and this is as little in conflict with the duty of brotherly love as it is with the duty of fearing God. Here we catch an echo of the word of the Lord in Mark xii. 17. Conflicts such as the times of the persecution of the Christians called forth, are still entirely outside of the horizon of the Apostle.

The Apostle then discusses the condition of the slaves.

(18) ¹Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. (19) For this is ²acceptable, if for conscience ³toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. (20) For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted *for it*, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye shall take it patiently, this is ²acceptable with God. (21) For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

¹ Gr. *Household-servants.*

² Gr. *grace.*

³ Gr. *of.*

- 18 Among the Jews of the Diaspora there were many who had been made slaves and were compelled to serve heathen masters. No doubt there were among these also some good and gentle masters, but also others who were thoroughly bad. But if the principle was once maintained, that they were to submit to all the human orders in which Christianity found them, then too they had to remain subject to this order, in the same fear of God. For just this very thing is a matter that is pleasing to God, if, in the consciousness, that God demands such subordination, we endure tribulations also patiently,
- 19 such as the conduct of these masters would naturally cause. As a matter of course it is here presupposed that they suffer innocently. For if they sin and receive stripes for this, it is no glory to accept these without complaint. Only when, notwithstanding his doing
- 20 good, a man suffers and does so patiently, does he become the object of the good pleasure of God. To such innocent and patient suffering they are called in their Christian calling, because Christ has suffered for their good, and endured, too, innocently and patiently. But this was the real purpose of His suffering, which was to be an example, that He thereby had intended to give them, as it were, a command, which they are to imitate
- 22 by following in His footsteps. That Christ's sufferings

(23) who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed ¹himself to him that judgeth righteously: (24) who his own self ²bare our sins in his body upon the tree. that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose ³stripes we were healed. (25) For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and ⁴Bishop of your souls.

¹ Or, *his cause*.

² Or, *carried up . . . to the tree*. Comp. Col. 2. 14;

1 Macc. 5. 53. (Gr.).

³ Gr. *bruise*.

⁴ Or, *overseer*.

were innocent, is already stated by Is. liii. 9. And 28 what is here further stated in v. 7, of the Messiah, can, without a figure, be expressed, that He never repaid like with like or even threatened this. But His abuse and whatever of evil was yet inflicted on Him, He submitted to the judgment of Him, who judges aright, whereas human courts are often partial. But Christ's sufferings were not only to be an example; He has also enabled and directed us to imitate them. For He, by His guiltless suffering of death has borne the punishment of our sins when He was nailed to the cross. 24 But if He bore so great suffering on account of our sins then we cannot and should not do otherwise than feel ourselves separated for all times from these sins, which caused His death, and henceforth to live for righteousness. For this is the experience of all believers, which is already expressed in Is. liii. 5, where it is stated, that through His stripes we are healed from the sickness of our sins. Slaves, who have become believers, must be healed in this way for all their disobedience and bitter feeling toward their masters, even if the latter are the most tyrannical. For they too were once, as is stated in 25 Is. liii. 6, like sheep going astray, for they had wandered away from the fold of God, such as Israel was to be, and had only wandered about in their sinful ways. But in their conversion they have returned to God, who already in Ez. xxxiv. 11, 12 is described as their shepherd

III In like manner, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands ; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the ¹ behavior of their wives ; (2) beholding your chaste ¹ behavior *coupled* with fear. (3) Whose *adorning* let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel ; (4) but *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible *apparel* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in

¹ Or, *manner of life.* ver. 16,

and guardian, and in whose protection now their souls have been delivered from destruction.

- In discussing the marriage relation, in accordance with
- 1 the purpose of this part of the Epistle, only those cases are considered in which the husbands of converted Jewesses have remained in their unbelief, because they had not rendered the obedience that was demanded to the word of the message of redemption, which had been brought to them also as well as to their wives. In this case the principle stated above could specially be applied, according to which the women, by their dutiful subordination could even win the unbelieving husband to an acceptance of the faith. True, this could not be done by words, which would do little good in cases where the word of God itself had been unavailing. Rather they should
 - 2 take care that the husbands, upon observing more closely, may be convinced, that this word had produced, in the wives, a morally pure life, based on their fear of
 - 3 God alone. True, they should also beautify themselves, in order to please their husbands ; but their ornaments are not to consist in those things which are put on outwardly, such as the vain skill in the braiding of hair, the putting on of gold ornaments or in dress, but is to be an
 - 4 inner beautifying of the heart. This is indeed in itself something that is hidden, but which, if it shines in the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet mind, can without a doubt be seen and will make an impression

the sight of God a great price. (5) For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own ¹ husbands: (6) as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not ² put in fear by any terror.

(7) Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with *your wives*

¹ Or, *husbands (as Sarah . . . ye are become), doing well, and not being afraid.*

² Or, *afraid with.*

on the men. For gentleness does not suffer itself to be provoked to anger, and the quiet mind will not be disturbed even by a harsh word. And even if such beauty does not make any impression on the men, it is nevertheless precious in the sight of God. The Apostle reminds the believing daughters of Israel of the holy women whom they knew so well from the pages of the Old Testament, and who, as they placed their hopes upon God, could beautify themselves with such a gentle ⁵ and meek mind, in subordinating themselves to their husbands, without running the risk, on account of their submission or yielding disposition, to be enslaved or to be despised. He reminds them especially of their ancestral mother Sarah, who was submissive to Abraham, and called him lord (cf. Gen. xviii. 12). It certainly ⁶ must be the greatest honor for them by showing a character like hers to be the genuine daughters of Sarah. But they never become such unless they do prove themselves faithful in the correct performance of their duties in spite of intimidations, no matter from which source this may come. But for this very reason, because this is a matter of the greatest importance for women, the Apostle above reminds them, that the holy women of the Old Covenant, who are to be their examples, placed their hopes upon God, under whose protection they need to fear no harm.

Here then the Apostle can also say a word about the duties of the husbands, since of these, too, a number ⁷

according to knowledge, giving honor ¹ unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered.

(8) Finally, be ye all likeminded, ²compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: (9) not rendering

¹ Gr. unto the female vessel, as weaker.

² Gr. sympathetic.

had probably already been converted, something that could, of course, not be said of the Gentile government and of the heathen masters of slaves. But in this case, too, he demands nothing more, than that the natural relation of the sexes as arranged at their creation be maintained. If we are all vessels, formed by the Creator's hands, nevertheless the female is the weaker vessel and can accordingly demand in the married estate that this condition receive due consideration. Only one thing Christianity has changed. The women are now already exactly on an equality with the men in the possession of divine grace, which gives them the promise of eternal life. If each one is to receive the honor which is due him, then the men must in this respect regard them as put on an equality with themselves, since every doubt of their equality in religious matters would prevent their common prayer, which here already appears as the crown of married life.

With the admonition to believing husbands in reference to the correct treatment of believing wives the Apostle finally connects an admonition to all believers
8 in reference to their treatment of each other. In this case there is need of unity of mind and of sympathy for each other through brotherly love. But the admonition to be merciful already reaches out beyond the circle of the brethren, and still more does the exhortation to humility lead to the manifestation of gentleness, and, in harmony with the point of view in this part of the Epistle, includes the conduct of the believers to-
9 wards their hostile surroundings. In this relation it is

evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing. (10) For,

¹ He that would love life,

And see good days,

Let him refrain his tongue from evil,

And his lips that they speak no guile:

(11) And let him turn away from evil and do good;

Let him seek peace and pursue it.

(12) For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,

And his ears unto their supplication:

But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

(13) And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? (14) But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear,

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 12 ff.

not right to avenge oneself, neither by word nor deed, to which the conduct of Christ Himself already points (cf. ii. 28). On the contrary, it is proper to repay the evil that is done us by good (cf. Luke vi. 28). For to this are we directed by our Christian calling, so that they receive from God, who repays like with like, actual blessings as their possession in payment for their pious wish. The Apostle in basing this on Ps. xxxiv. 14-17, 10 presupposes that these exhortations and promises are 12 known to the believers out of Israel as perfectly trustworthy words of the Scriptures; and he bases on this the question, who in reality would do them harm if they 13 have become zealous for the good? The answer to this is found in the well known word of the Lord in Matt. v. 14 10, in connection with which the Apostle points out, that the case here presupposed by Christ is not at all a common one in their situation, but yet one that could occur. If the case should, however, occur, then Peter warns also with the word of the Scriptures against the fear of men (Is. viii. 12). But instead of setting up against this the fear of God, as is done in Is. viii. 13

neither be troubled ; (15) but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord : *being* ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear : (16) having a good conscience ; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who

- 15 (cf. Matt. x. 20), he applies this word to Christ, who can be worshipped as the divine Lord in our hearts only if through fear of Him we overcome all human fear. But he does this, in order to speak of the way, in which the readers in their circumstances can prove this duty of worshipping Christ, by being constantly prepared to confess Christ as Him, whose exaltation to divine glory is the foundation of hope for the approaching consummation of redemption, which hope is in them and distinguishes them from their unbelieving fellow-countrymen. The Apostle expressly describes this as a giving answer to everybody, who demands an account of them concerning this hope of redemption. For evidently he, who had hitherto been thinking chiefly of their Gentile surroundings, now proceeds to speak of those of their people who had remained unbelievers. For only these know of this hope of salvation, and will ask, how they come to claim this hope for themselves. Over against these people, it is necessary for them boldly to confess Christ, whom these considered an executed criminal, but whom they themselves consider the foundation of their salvation. Of course this is not to be done with intemperate zeal, to which the hostility to Christ evinced by the unbelievers could arouse them, but with gentleness and with the fear of Christ, who will finally demand an account of the way in which
- 16 they have defended His cause. But they can champion the cause of their Christian hope only then if they have the good conscience of leading a life in conformity with this hope. In this connection those who despise

revile your good manner of life in Christ. (17) For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. (18) Because Christ also¹ suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous,

¹ Many ancient authorities read *died*.

their religious behavior, i. e. that which is in conformity with the commands of Christ, are undoubtedly as a rule the unbelieving Jews, from whom in all probability the slanders current among the heathens concerning the Christians (cf. ii. 12) to a great extent emanated, although they were refuted by actual facts in the case.

With the thought that, should it be the will of God 17 that we are to suffer, it nevertheless is better for us to suffer for doing good than for doing evil, because in the latter case the suffering could be only the punishment for our sins, the Apostle proceeds to a concluding consideration of the blessing of innocent suffering. In mentioning as the greatest example of this Christ Him- 18 self, he must naturally point out, that this example is in one respect perfectly unique, since, in order to atone for sins, one could die only once. But as this entire part of the Epistle proceeds from the thought that the Christians by their good conduct were to become a blessing for their neighbors also, then certainly the suffering of Christ was beyond a doubt the suffering of a just person for the good of the unjust, and had nothing less for its purpose than to bring back to God those who had been estranged from Him through their sins, so that they henceforth could serve before Him in their priestly capacity (cf. ii. 5-9). This He could only do, if for their redemption He died the death of the sinner, and subsequently was raised from the dead in order to complete His redemptive work in heaven. As He was able to do the former, because according to His nature as of flesh He belonged to this earth and its

III, 19-20] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

that he might bring us to God ; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit ; (19) in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, (20) that aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,¹ wherein few,

¹ Or, *into which few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through water.*

transitoriness, so could He accomplish the latter, because according to His spiritual nature He had an imperishable life within Him, which was destined to be
19 transformed by being re clothed with a new body. This is proved by the fact, that while the spirits of those who have died are held as prisoners in a shadowlike existence to the great day of the resurrection and judgment, He in the spirit went down to the spirits in prison in order to bring the message of redemption to these also, as He had brought it to mankind upon earth. But only in this way does the whole comprehensiveness of the
20 blessing become clear which His death has produced. For even to those who in the days of Noah, when the long suffering of God was waiting for the conversion of mankind, who had fallen under the dominion of sin and whom the building of the ark daily reminded of the approaching judgment, with very few exceptions had remained in unbelief and for this reason were destroyed in the terrible judgment of the deluge, Jesus has also proclaimed the message of redemption when He descended into the region of the dead. But as this blessing of His death extends backward to the earliest ages of mankind, it also extends forward to the end of days. For as the deluge was only a type of the final judgment, so the deliverance of those eight souls, who after they had ascended into the ark were saved from the water which bore them up in safety, was only a type of the deliverance in the final judgment granted us through the water of baptism. For this immersion

that is, eight souls, were saved through water: (21) which also ¹after a true likeness doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of filth of the flesh, but the ²interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; (22) who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

IV Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same ³mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased ⁴from sin; (2) that ⁵ye no

¹ Or, *in the antitype*. ² Or, *inquiry*. Or, *appeal*. ³ Or, *thought*. ⁴ Some ancient authorities read *unto sins*. ⁵ Or, *he no longer . . . his time*.

is not an action by which the pollution of the flesh is 21 washed away, but one in which we ask God for the cleansing of our conscience from the sense of sin, which cleansing we thus certainly attain. But baptism can) 22 deliver from eternal destruction only because He who has arisen and through His resurrection has ascended into heaven and who sits at the right hand of God, i. e. has been exalted to the perfect dominion of the world, to whom all the classes of heavenly beings are subjected in the final judgment, leads those who through His death have been cleansed from the consciousness of sin to the consummation of redemption. So far then the blessing of the innocent sufferings which Jesus endured according to His human nature, extends.

But if this is the case, then we, too, are to arm ourselves 1 with the same motive which induced Him to suffer, namely with the thought of the blessed results of such sufferings. In our case, indeed, only that blessing can be primarily expected which the suffering in our body brings to us ourselves. For the believer to whom the sinful world, in which he still lives according to the flesh, but from which he is separated on account of his right- 2 eousness, must cause sufferings, must once for all be thereby prevented from sinning. For thereby all its hostility to God becomes manifest to him, which will

longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. (3) For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries: (4) wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* into the same ¹excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*: (5) who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead. (6) For unto

¹ Or, *food*.

necessarily cause him during the rest of the time which he still has to live in the flesh, not to live according to the flesh nor to follow the lusts of man, but solely the will of God. What kind of a blessing this is, the Apostle makes clear in view of the change which has been worked in
 8 the hearts of the believers from Israel. It certainly is bad enough, that they who should and could know the will of God, had in the past done the will of the heathen among whom they were living, by permitting themselves to be drawn into their sinful life, and if not into actual idolatry, yet into a participation to a great extent in the idolatrous abomination, which was expressly forbidden them by their law. This is the very thing that the heathen cannot understand in them, now that they no
 4 longer wallow in the mire of wickedness, but have suddenly turned from their former sinful lives. We here learn that the abuse of the heathen, under which the believing Jews were compelled to suffer, was intended to dull the sting of sin, which the conversion of their former companions of wickedness left behind in their conscience. But they must give an account of this
 5 to Him, who is already prepared at His return to judge the living and the dead. Yes, the dead also; for the Apostle, again returning to the blessings that were the fruits of the death of Christ, of which he had spoken in iii. 19, in reference to a certain class of persons, now
 6 reminds them that for this reason the gospel is preached

this end ¹ was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

(7) But the end of all things is at hand : be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto ² prayer : (8) above all things

¹ Or, were the good tidings preached. ² prayers.

also to the dead in general, in order that they who, like all flesh, in their death have already experienced the judgment over sin, nevertheless are enabled, according to the Spirit, through the return to their life in the resurrection, to attain to an eternal life, such as is the life of God. It all depends upon their having accepted or not this message of Christ in the region of the dead ; for according to this His judgment will be pronounced over both the living and the dead.

The Third Principal Part of the letter contains an exhortation concerning the life to be led within the Christian communion. These admonitions proceed 7 from a presumption that the end is near, a fact, which demands that dispassionate prudence and sober clearness of mind, without which men cannot be in a condition of mind suitable for the common prayers through which they are to prepare themselves for the end. But above all other things are thereby prevented outbursts of passion which could impair the tie of mutual love, the necessity of which on the part of His disciples as one of their fundamental duties is again and again emphasized by Jesus. This love must continue in its full 8 fervor. It seems as though the Apostle was thinking of the word, with which Jesus on one occasion had emphasized the absolute duty of forgiving each other (Matt. xviii. 21, 22), since He, in the language of Prov. x. 12, points to the fact that forgiving love is always ready to cover up the new transgressions of a neighbor. Among the manifestations of that love which gives to

being fervent in your love among yourselves ; for love covereth a multitude of sins : (9) using hospitality one to another without murmuring : (10) according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God ; (11) if any man speaketh, *speaking* as it were oracles of God ; if any man ministereth, *ministering* as of the strength which God supplieth : that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion ¹ for ever and ever. Amen.

¹ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

others, Peter mentions first of all that hospitality which in those times was so necessary, and which must be exercised, and that too without murmuring, because of the sacrifice which this duty imposes upon us. But love shows itself especially in service, as Jesus has at all times said. For this reason God has given to each one his special gift, with which he is to serve the other. For Jesus too has already called His disciples householders (Matt. xxv. 14 sqq.), to whom the manifold grace of God has given these gifts, only in order that they, as is befitting the genuine householders, use them according to His will for the service of the brethren. If one has received the gift of speaking, he is not to use it, in order to gain honor for himself, but to serve the brethren with it, because he must himself first receive the necessary words to be uttered from God. If a person has received the gift of doing works of effective service, he is constantly to remember, that the power to do this has been given him by God, and for this reason he must use his power according to His will. Only in this way, through the use of the divine gifts of grace, can God be glorified as the giver of these through Jesus Christ, who gives us the impulse and the power for these. For it is God, to whom the glory and the power belongs, to all eternity, the praise of whom the Apostle closes with his Amen.

(12) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you : (13) but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice ; that at the revelation of his glory also that ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. (14) If ye are reproached ¹ for the name of Christ, blessed are ye ; because the *Spirit* of glory and the Spirit of God resteth

¹ Gr. *in*.

But the right congregational life shows itself not only in deeds but also in suffering. The suffering that is here meant is by no means that which may occasionally fall to the lot of individuals, but that which falls upon the congregation as a whole. For this suffering is caused by the people of their own nation among whom they live and who have continued in unbelief, and for that reason it becomes all the more as a fire ; but it is brought upon them only in order to test their faith. For this reason, however new their experience in this direction may be, they are not to regard that as strange, or which they had no reason to expect. For in the same way Christ has suffered at the hands of His fellow-countrymen ; and in the same degree to which they now must take part in these sufferings, something which Christ has predicted to His disciples (Matt. x. 24), they can only rejoice on this account, because it gives them the surety that their discipleship is genuine. Indeed, unless they now rejoice in this communion with His sufferings, they cannot hope, finally, to rejoice exultingly at the revelation of His glory, because they can take part in this as His genuine disciples, just as they now share in His sufferings. For now it is a question of being maltreated in the name of Christ. Here it becomes perfectly clear, that the Apostle is not speaking of the kind of wrong, which they suffer at the hands of the Gentiles, but of the reproach which is heaped upon them by the people of their own nation, because these

upon you. (15) For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters : (16) but if a *man* suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed ; but let him glorify God in this name. (17) For the time is

- consider Him, whom they call their Messiah, as a crucified criminal. But surely this reproach is more than made good by the fact, that, according to the promise, cf. Matt. x. 19-20, the Spirit of God rests upon them as disciples, in whom they already receive a foretaste of the future glory, which they are afterwards to share with Christ, because this glory belongs to His Spirit. But then they can in reality be blessed, if they suffer such reproach because of the name of Christ. Of course, in this connection it is presupposed as self-evident, that this
- 15 reproach will not fall to their lot on account of any crime, or on account of any thoughtlessness, of which they have been guilty in an unwise zeal for the conversion and betterment of others, by mixing in with things which are none of their affairs. But if they suffer reproach only for the name of Christ, they are to see in
- 16 this no reason for being ashamed, but are rather only to strive to glorify God in this name. For if they, by their walk, honor the name of Christian, which God has called them to bear, then thereby is glorified God who through the Messiah, whom He has sent to them and has taught them to recognize as such, has produced good works in them (cf. ii. 12). At this point, the Apostle takes occasion to say, that these general afflictions that befall the congregation, are appointed for their trial. The prophets already continually speak of the time when
- 17 the judgment is to begin in the house of God (cf. Ez. ix. 6 ; Jer. xxv. 29). But they are the house of God, and this is the time, when it is decided by these trials who among the members of the household is found to be a

come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begins first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the ¹gospel of God? (18) And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? (19) Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

¹ Gr. *good tidings*. See Mt. 4. 23 marg.

genuine disciple of Jesus, not being ashamed of the name of Christ, but glorifying God therein. But if in this way the judgment is already beginning in the house of God, what will be the end of it when, later, it will be extended over those who in disobedience have rejected the gospel of God that is offered therein? But these latter can be none other than those Jews who have continued in their unbelief and are now excluded from the house of God, because they alone knew God and knew that His message of redemption demanded their acceptance of it. By the nature of the case, the judgment as it develops must grow in intensity; and if, according 18 to Prov. xi. 31, the just can scarcely be saved, where else will sinners appear excepting among those who are doomed to destruction? If then according to the will of God, the sufferings which the believers from among Israel endure at the hands of the unbelieving portion of their nation, have been appointed to them for a trial, 19 they are not to permit themselves on account of their weakness to be terrified, but are confidently to commit their souls to the protection of God. If He has created them for salvation, He, in His faithfulness, must keep the promise which He has given them. He will preserve their souls from everything that might make them lose their faith and thereby also their redemption. If only they continue doing good, i. e. in the simple performance of their duty, they may be certain of His protection.

The Apostle in concluding especially addresses his admonitions to those among them who hold office in the

V The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: (2) Tend the flock of God which is among you, ¹ exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, ² according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (3) neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. (4) And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *exercising the oversight*.

² Some ancient authorities omit *according to the will of God*.

- 1 congregation. His right to give this admonition he bases on the fact that he also is an elder as they are, excepting that to him the care of all the congregations has been entrusted, as to them the care of their individual congregation, and because he can speak as an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, which certainly is the foundation of this right. But He can testify of His glory also, the revelation of which is yet a matter of the future, in so far as he certainly hopes to participate in it. As the Lord had commanded him to feed His sheep (cf. John xxi. 16-17), so he impresses
- 2 upon them the right way of leading and feeding the flock of God, since a portion of this flock had been entrusted to each of them. In contradistinction to the compulsion of duty is found the activity of free inner volition, after the manner of God, who is certainly the true shepherd and protector, (cf. ii. 25). In contrast to the shameless greed for gain is to be their willingness to every sacrifice; in contrast to brutal dominion
- 3 over that portion of the flock which has been entrusted to them, which Jesus already had condemned (cf. Mark x. 42), is to be exercised the power over the flock which a good example wields. By this means they, when at the return of Christ it becomes known, that God has appointed Him to be the Head-shepherd, i. e.
- 4 to be the Lord of the whole congregation, shall receive

I PETER

[V, 5-7

crowu of glory that fadeth not away. (5) ¹ Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to sserve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. (6) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; (7) casting all your anxiety

¹ Or, *Likewise . . . clder; yea, all of you one to another. Gird yourselves with humility.*

- from Him the glory which will bedeck them as a crown of immortelles. As he himself is certain of participation in this glory, he can show them the way to the attainment of it. Other congregational offices did not exist at the time the Apostle wrote.
- 5 But whatever other services were demanded of the congregation, those who are younger in years are to perform in subordination to the elders, to which position only those advanced in years were elected. For this humility is necessary; but this Christian virtue of humility, even as it is, everybody is obliged to practise in his dealings with the others; and, because it is easily lost, as though it is the beautiful gem on the Christian garment, it is necessary to bind it fast to its place. Already in Prov. iii. 34, the grace of God is promised to humility, but this is denied to pride.
- 6 With this the Apostle returns to his general admonition to those, who are willing in their relations with God to submit also to His mighty hand. For it is an evidence of pride, if a man thinks he knows what is good for him better than God does, who has placed him in a distressing situation. Only he who in this condition remains meek and humble, will, according to the promise of Jesus in Luke xiv. ii., be exalted by God in due time, in the heavenly perfection of redemption. If from this condition of life worry arises, he is, according to Ps. lv. 23, to cast his cares upon the Lord, because He who has brought him into this situation, will

upon him, because he careth for you. (8) Be sober, be watchful: your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) whom withstand stedfast in ¹your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are ²accomplished in your ³brethren who are in the world. (10) And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself ⁴perfect, establish, strengthen ⁵you. (11) To him be the dominion ⁶for ever and ever. Amen.

(12) By Silvanus, ⁷our faithful brother, as I account him,

¹ Or, *the*. ² Gr. *being accomplished*. ³ Gr. *brotherhood*. ⁴ Or, *restore*.
⁵ Many ancient authorities add *settle*. ⁶ Or, *unto the ages of the ages*.
⁷ Gr. *this*.

take care of him. This Christian freedom from care is indeed neither blind enthusiasm nor weak indifference to whatever may happen, by which the clearness and alertness of mind so necessary for the repulse of the
8 tempter is lost. For the Devil, who is our real adversary, is at all times seeking, as a lion on the look out for prey, to destroy the Christian, by leading
9 him to lose his faith. In order that we may resist him through our faith, we must be strengthened by the consciousness, that these are Satan's trials, such as come upon us through sufferings, and are a necessary concomitant of our condition in the Christian brotherhood in the midst of the world (cf. John xv. 18-19). They are only the beginning of an experience which works
10 itself out in a natural way to our advantage. Of course we cannot of ourselves attain this steadfastness. But God, from whom all manifestations of grace come, after having given us the sufferings, and called us in His redemptive message of Christ, which imposes these brief trials as a passage to His eternal glory, will certainly not fail to give us all that is needed farther, in order to give us steadfastness, in whatever way we
11 stand in need of it. This certainty the Apostle seals with a tribute of praise to His eternal power.

12 In the conclusion of his Epistle Peter mentions that

I PETER

[V, 18-14]

I have written unto you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God : stand ye fast therein. (13) ¹ she that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you ; and so doth Mark my son. (14) Salute one another with a kiss of love. Peace be unto you all that are in Christ.

¹ That is, The church, or, the sister.

Silvanus as the bearer of the letter, who is orally to explain to them fully what he has herein written in a few words. For this reason he describes him as a faithful and reliable brother, and this indeed as only expressing his own judgment in regard to him, but with an emphasis which demands of them too to recognize him as such. He mentions here also the purpose of his letter. It is to be an exhortation. But as those who have proclaimed the gospel to its readers (cf. i. 12) had evidently not been Apostles, but only persons recently converted, who had carried the seed of the gospel from the mother country to the Diaspora of Asia Minor, he considered it necessary for this reason to confirm for them through his Apostolic testimony this, that the grace of God, which had been preached to them, and which had become the firm foundation upon which they stood, is the truth. For this reason the exhortations throughout the Epistle are found interwoven with the testimony to the divine redemptive acts. Peter is in Babylon, where he was evidently laboring in the Diaspora of the distant Orient, and he sends greetings to the Diaspora of the West, to whom 13 he is writing, from the congregations there as their fellow elect. The Mark whom he describes as his spiritual son is certainly the son of the Mary whose household was on such close friendly terms with the Apostle (cf. Acts xii. 12), the Mark whom he had converted. 14 He appeals to the readers to greet each other in his name with the brotherly kiss, and closes with the usual benediction (cf. Luke x. 5), which prays for redemption for those who walk in Christ (cf. iii. 16).

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

I ¹ Simon Peter, a ²servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a ³like precious faith with us in the righteousness of ⁴our God and *the Saviour Jesus Christ*:

¹ Many ancient authorities read *Symeon*. See Acts 15. 1.

² Gr. *bondservant*.

³ Gr. *equally precious*.

⁴ Or. *our God and Saviour*. Comp. ver 11, 8. 20 : 8. 18 ; T. 13.

- 1 Peter writes a second letter to the same congregations to which his first Epistle is directed (cf. iii. 1); but these congregations had in the meanwhile changed materially. The small circle of Jewish believers, who, according to the first letter were gathered at the gospel summons, had developed into large congregations through the extensive mission operations carried on by the Apostle of the Gentiles, and these congregations now consisted for the most part of former heathens. For this reason he first introduces himself to them more fully as that Simon, who had been called by the Messiah Jesus into His service. He designates himself by that name which He had given him, and which he continues to bear in his Apostolic activity. Through the Hebrew form of the name, Symeon, he characterizes himself as one of the believers out of Israel, in contrast to whom, however, they are described, although they were Gentile Christians, as having received the same faith as himself without any worth or merit on their part. But this faith is of the same value to them, because it makes them certain of the same completion of their redemption, which had been promised to the Jews in the Messianic predictions. This is based on the divine righteousness which has no respect

II PETER

[I, 3-4

(2) Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; (3) seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us ¹by his own glory and virtue; (4) whereby he hath granted unto us

¹ Some ancient authorities read *through glory and virtue*.

for persons, and which accordingly makes no distinction between Jews and heathen. But because it is Christ, who has worked in them an equally precious faith because of this unique divine attribute of righteousness, He is here called our God and Saviour, who has through this faith made it possible for them to secure deliverance from eternal destruction. The benediction which opens the 2 letter, is exactly the same as that found in the first Epistle (cf. 1 Pet. i. 2), except that in this case emphasis is laid on the fact that, as regards those who had been Gentiles, who had known nothing of God, this blessing can be pronounced only through the knowledge of God, which they have gained by having learned to see in Jesus their exalted Lord, through whose exaltation everything that He, during His earthly career, has proclaimed concerning the graciousness of God and concerning the redemption achieved through it, has been found as true and trustworthy.

The introduction to the Epistle starts with a 3 statement of the fact, which is expressly declared to furnish authority for what follows, namely, that the divine power of our exalted Lord has given us everything the increase of which the Apostle wishes to his readers, because this only can lead to spiritual life. The leading characteristic of such life is godliness. But He has done this by teaching us to know God as Him, who has called us to His heavenly glory and blessedness through His own heavenly glory and power. For only 4 through these could He promise us those things which

his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of ¹the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. (5) Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in *your* virtue knowledge; (6) and in *your* knowledge self-control; and in *your*

¹ Or, a.

go beyond every earthly gift and belong to the heavenly world, and He alone thus gives them to us in such a way as ensures their fulfilment. But how superior these are to even the most glorious promises of the Old Covenant, is clear from the fact, that these alone can produce in the readers a participation in the divine nature that is separated from all that is transient and sinful, so that they actually become holy as God is holy. In this way they also escape the transitoriness that holds dominion in the world, which is only an image of and a prelude to the eternal destruction, which sinful lusts necessarily bring with them, and they become capable of the heavenly glory to which they are called. But although God has in Christ so far given them everything that they need, they are not thereby excused from the duty of doing their share toward the

5 attainment of this goal. They are rather compelled for this very reason to manifest the greatest zeal, in order to render the tribute which God demands in giving His gift. He has worked in them the firm confidence in the heavenly consummation of redemption that has been awakened in them through the promises made in His calling of them through Christ. They accordingly are to apply their strength and perseverance to the work, under the determining influence of this confidence. But this application cannot exist without prudent insight, which

6 avoids misleading rashness. This constantly alert prudence can be preserved only through self-control,

II PETER

[I, 7-9

self-control ¹patience; and in *your* ¹patience godliness; (7) and in *your* godliness ²brotherly kindness; and in *your* ²brotherly kindness love. (8) For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (9) For he that lacketh these things is blind, ³seeing only what is near, having for-

¹ Or, *steadfastness*.

² Gr. *love of the brethren*.

³ Or, *closing his eyes*.

which restrains the natural lusts of the body; and this develops into a firm endurance under the trials of affliction. But all of these moral qualities are not ⁷ what they should be without true godliness, which, as in its immediate circle, so in the wider circle produces brotherly love, as well as love in general. Unless this disposition is present in them, and in consequence thereof the zeal that has been awakened in them is constantly increasing, they cannot be such as possess both the desire and the power to realize in corresponding conduct the knowledge of Christ our Lord. This knowledge has been given them by God, who guarantees to them the consummation of redemption. Only the idle lack the former, while he who has produced no fruits of this knowledge cannot possess the latter. For in ⁹ whom all this is not present, in him certainly this knowledge has not yet been realized. He is therefore so far spiritually blind, or at least shortsighted, like one who blinks with the eyes, because he cannot yet perceive the consequences of his knowledge, or who may have lost his former knowledge by forgetting what he had once known. In this way all three things can take place, each according to different aspects of the knowledge of Christ. For this reason the Apostle, in connection with the third case, mentions the fundamental fact of our redemption, according to which we are cleansed through the blood of Christ from the pollution that was caused by the sins committed in our pre-Christian state. For this fact, which certainly is

gotten the cleansing from his own sins. (10) Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: (11) for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

(12) Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are

- the first which we learn in knowing Christ, cannot escape our apprehension, nor can its necessary consequences be overlooked. It can only be entirely forgotten when adherence to our old sins hinder our development in the life of Christian virtue. As this is nevertheless possible, the Apostle warns his Christian brethren with all the greater zeal to maintain the calling which been given them through grace, by which they have been selected from the mass of those who will be lost, and are predestined to the completion of their redemption. For this calling does not force them to such a consummation, but merely makes its attainment possible, so that if they fail to show this zeal, they certainly will stumble on their way to the glorious goal. For if this zeal is present in them, and with it everything which the Apostle has above described as contributing on their part to their redemption, then God also will not fail to add His co-operation, which, in harmony with His nature, will be abundantly more fruitful than their unaided efforts. In this way they will surely secure the entrance to the eternal kingdom of Christ, who, as the Ruler of this kingdom, will in this kingdom deliver us from eternal destruction.

- In order to give his reasons for writing, the Apostle proceeds from the statement, that, on account of the great importance of the exhortations with which he began, he will at all times be ready to remind them of

II PETER

[I, 13-16]

established in the truth which is with *you*. (13) And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; (14) knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. (15) Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my ¹decease to call these things to remembrance. (16) For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and ²coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-

¹ Or, *departure*.

² Gr. *presence*.

these. It is true, that they are already instructed in these matters, and have become firm in the truth, which they had accepted; but he regards it as his duty as long as he is in the tabernacle of this body to arouse them to a livelier zeal through such remembrance. To this he 13 adds, that he knows, that in his case the laying aside of this tabernacle will not take place through sickness or the weaknesses of old age, so that he could make all preparations for his end, but that it will take place sud- 14 denly, because it will be caused by a violent death, such as the present state of affairs—he is probably a prisoner in Rome or was in danger from other sources—leads him to expect. But the Lord Himself had also revealed this to him by His reference to his death as a martyr (cf. John xxi. 18, 19). In order that they may, after his departure, still have something that will recall to their memory these admonitions and in so far take the 15 place of his reminding them, which he will never cease to keep up during his life, he makes it a point to put these 16 admonitions into permanent form in this letter. He and his fellow Apostles have not followed, like certain others did of whom we shall hear farther on, shrewdly devised fables, when they preach to the believers the divine power and the return of Christ. They themselves rather had been eyewitnesses of His divine majesty, when Christ appeared to them in His heavenly transfiguration,

witnesses of his majesty. (17) For he ¹received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : (18) and this voice we *ourselves* heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. (19) And we have the word of prophecy *made* more sure ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a ²dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star

¹ Gr. *having received*.

² Gr. *squalid*.

- which represented the divine glory into which He entered and in which He is to return. Nor could there
- 17 have been any deception in this matter, since God the Father Himself gave Him honor and glory, when a voice of such significance came forth from the glory of God's majesty which appeared in the cloud of light, and God declared Christ to be His Son. But this voice they
- 18 themselves have heard, when it resounded from heaven, as they were with Jesus on the mountain, which through this appearance there of the glory of God has been for all times consecrated to be a holy mountain.
- 19 But the Apostles have still another warrant for that which they preach concerning the divine power and the return of Christ in the prophetic word, which has been rendered still more sure and reliable by what they themselves experienced, since the fulfilment of His promises were first ratified thereby. The readers will act wisely to heed this as to a lamp in a dark place. For also after the knowledge of redemption which has been gained through Christ, the earth continues to be such a dark place. For the fulfilment of the promises made to them is still a matter of the future. This can only change, when the day of the future of redemption breaks forth in its full splendor, and thereby dispels all darkness. Then indeed they will no longer need the lamp of the prophetic word, because, like the morning star, which ascends with the breaking day, to-

II PETER

[II, 1

arise in your hearts : (20) knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of a ¹private interpretation. (21) For no prophecy ever ²came by the will of man : but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

II But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in ³destructive heresies, denying even the Master

¹ Or, *special*.

² Gr. *was brought*.

³ Or, *sects of perdition*.

gether with the day of the fulfilment of prophecy the complete knowledge of the consummation of redemption will also come. For one thing they must above all things know, lest in regarding the prophetic word they expect that which it cannot give, and thus are merely confused by it. There is no prophecy of the Scriptures which is determined in its meaning by the interpretation of anyone, and thus brings with it the full knowledge of what it foretells ; this knowledge can be given only when the fulfilment has come. Indeed, if ever a prophecy has been produced by a human will, then the prophet must certainly have known the facts contemplated in his prophecy, and would accordingly himself direct the attentive readers to these and thus furnish the interpretation. But such an interpretation of the Scriptures does not exist. It is true indeed that men have spoken in these prophecies, but they spoke only that which they had received from God through the Holy Ghost. Hence it is clear, that prophecy cannot furnish its own interpretation, but that only God, from whom it comes, can give this interpretation in the facts of the fulfilment.

As the Apostle emphasizes the fact, that among the nation in the midst of which those men of God spoke, false prophets had arisen, this is because that nation in everything is the divinely intended type of the Christian congregation. We must conclude from this, what is to be expected in reference to the future false

that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth

prophets in the congregation. This fact is one of those which induced the Apostle to write this letter. For such false prophets, by the side of the true doctrine, will introduce teachings which necessarily lead to destruction, since these do not refer only to errors in matters of knowledge, but to the justification of a service of sin, which actually denies the authority of the Lord, who has bought us free from the service of sin by His blood. For this reason they will thereby, first of all, bring speedy destruction upon themselves. But this does not prevent their misleading many, not indeed through their teachings, but through their licentiousness, for which these teachings give them free scope, and a life of this kind is an enticing example. Then, through their evil behavior, the way of the truth, as his hearers have learned to understand the truth, will be slandered as a way of sin, and seemingly this is then justly done. The success of these false teachers will be largely due to their arts of speaking, although they employ their well-selected words only through greed, as a means of using the readers for their financial benefit, since they charge highly for their teachings, and know how to make use of these for all kinds of advantages. But the punishment, in olden times, inflicted on their prototypes, the false prophets of the Old Testament, does not remain idle, and the destruction threatened them does not sleep, but is ever watchful, awake and ready to fall upon them also. The punishments of God in the Old Testament teach so much as this. These are

II PETER

[II, 4-7]

not, and their destruction slumbereth not. (4) For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but ¹ cast them down to ² hell, and committed them to ³ pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; (5) and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, ⁴ a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; (6) and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly; (7) and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the

¹ Or, cast them into dungeons. ² Gr. Tartarus. ³ Some ancient authorities read chains. Comp. Wisd. 17. 17. ⁴ Gr. a herald.

merely types of that which is to take place in the case of later false teachers. For God did not spare even the 4 angels who sinned, but, as Jude has already described in his letter (v. 6), delivered them over to the caves of the earth, which are filled with eternal darkness, when He transferred them to the lower world, where they are kept until the final judgment. Nor did He spare the 5 whole world when He sent the deluge over the ancient world, because it was full of godless people; and He saved only Noah and seven others because Noah had been a preacher of righteousness to his contemporaries (cf. 1 Pet. iii. 20). Jude v. 7, had already pointed to 6 the flourishing cities of the Siddim valley as an example of such punishment. When God consumed them with fire and brimstone, He condemned them, as it were, to be turned topsy-turvy (cf. Gen. xix. 24-25, 29). In this way He made them an example to those who in the future should lead sinful lives as their inhabitants did. However, as a comfort for those who shall live to see the advent of the judgment of punishment, Peter 7 points, as in the other case he did to Noah, in this connection, to just Lot, whom God delivered from this terrible destruction, because he not only refused to take part in the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, but was compelled to suffer on account of the wicked licentious-

wicked (8) (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, ¹ vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* lawless deeds) : (9) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous

¹ Gr. *tormented*.

- 8 ness of that sinful people. Peter seems to regard the living of Lot among their people as a voluntary act, and to consider Him then to be like Noah, a preacher of righteousness and a true prophet, in contrast to the false teachers, who were the types of the false teachers of the future. For he emphasizes the fact, that the just one himself was tortured in soul daily by seeing and hearing this ungodliness. But now Peter openly states what he means by this reference to Noah and to Lot. God knows how to deliver godly people, such as these were, and such as the believers in the future will be, and that, too, not only from the divine punishment,
- 9 which is pronounced over false prophets, but also from the temptation which their errors bring with them. These temptations, after people have been misled by them, will bring the same punishment upon those who deceive and those who are deceived. But the main thought is still the punishment of those false prophets, in connection with which the Apostle is not thinking of the judgment of the last day, in which all the godless are condemned, but of judgments in time, such as are provoked by evil-doers of this kind, and which bring upon them destruction in time, so that they shall be kept in the lower world reserved for the punishment which must fall upon them on the day of judgment.

Peter would not have spoken so fully of the dangers of the future if the beginnings of these had not already appeared at that very time in the case of those who preached a carnal freedom, such as the Epistle of Jude already depicts in such dark colors. Here the Apostle

II PETER

[II, 10-13]

under punishment unto the day of judgment ; (10) but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion. Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at ¹dignities: (11) whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord. (12) But these, as creatures without reason, born ²mere animals ³to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their ⁴destroying

¹ Gr. *glories*. ² Gr. *natural*. ³ Or, *to take and to destroy*. ⁴ Or, *corruption*. Comp. 1 Tim. 6. 9.

counts among those who are ripe for the final judgment 10 those who run after everything that is carnal, as though they could not satisfy quickly enough their eagerness to pollute themselves with the sin of fornication, and despise every authority that tries to check such conduct. He calls them self-satisfied, self-willed persons, because in their self-glorification they do not even fear to revile the Satanic powers, whose victims they surely have become, by denying, when they are warned against these, all power and might to those spirits who have fallen so deep. This is explain- 11 able only by a reference to an ancient Jewish tradition, which we find also in Jude v. 9. The Apostle points to the fact that even angels, who in power and might vastly surpass those powers of darkness, do not venture to bring before God a judgment concerning them which would sound like railing. The Apostle compares 12 these people with senseless animals, because they revile beings, the dangerous character of whom they neither know nor desire to know. These, as purely creatures of nature, are destined from birth for nothing but to be taken captive, and by being slain to become the victims of corruption. On the other hand, the spiritual beings, who are intended for higher things, through their senseless doings, cast themselves into the same destruction to which the others are subjected, even ruining themselves bodily. In this way, even

surely be destroyed, (18) suffering wrong as the hire of wrongdoing; *men* that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their ¹deceivings while they feast with you; (14) having eyes full of ²adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unstedfast souls; having a

¹ Some ancient authorities read *love-feasts*. Comp. Jude 12.

² Gr. *as adulteress*.

-
- 18 here upon earth, they are defrauded of the wages of their immoral conduct, as they seek through this conduct to increase their sensual enjoyment of life, and yet they only destroy their sensual life. The fact that they are thereby destroying their spiritual and eternal life also, is intimated in the original Greek. Clearer reference is made to this, when it is said that they merely consider the voluptuousness of each day as pleasure, with which their souls are fed, although life passes away like a short day, and what will come after this will show them sufficiently that they have been cheated out of the reward of their immorality. As immoral spots and disgraceful blemishes, they are an offense to the table companionship to which they are invited. They, as it were, carouse in defrauding those at whose table they are feasting, by abusing this hospitality for the gratification
- 14 of their sensual desires and their selfish pleasure. Their eyes are not able to see anything else than an adulteress, and as such they desire to treat the wife of their host. And, as they are not able to cease sinning with their lustful glances and words, they constantly entice new souls, who are not yet sufficiently firm to resist their allurements. With such fornication the other specifically Gentile sin of covetousness is connected, in the art of which their hearts are experienced, so that, with the opportunity of good living which they find at the table of their guest-friend, they know how to abuse this in a crafty and fraudulent manner. But that thereby they are still further cheated out of the wages of their im-

II PETER

[II, 15-18]

heart exercised in covetousness ; children of cursing ; (15) forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed the way of Balaam the son of ¹ Beor, who loved the hire of wrongdoing ; (16) but he was rebuked for his own transgression : a dumb ass spake with man's voice and stayed the madness of the prophet. (17) These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm ; for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved. (18) For, uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness,

¹ Many ancient authorities read *Boeor*.

morality, can be seen from the fact that by these 15 actions they have entirely become the object of the divine curse. How far they have wandered astray by leaving the straight path is seen from the fact, that they thereby have merely followed on the path of Balaam, who also loved the wages of ungodliness, which Balak offered him (cf. Num. xxii. 16, 17). But he was, against 16 his will, convicted of his ungodliness through the ass, which, although not endowed with reason and language, yet miraculously received the power of human speech, and thereby prevented the prophet's senseless folly (cf. Num. xxii. 23-30). But, in order to come to the main 17 thing which makes the conduct of these people so deceiving, the Apostle compares them with springs which give no water, and with empty fog-clouds which are driven by the storm and fail to bring the longed-for rain. For they do not do what they promise, wherefore the blackness of darkness, i. e. the judgment of destruction, is reserved for them. They utter great words, the 18 high-sounding character of which stands in the extreme antithesis to their inner hollowness and vanity, as is already seen from the fact, that in reality it is by no means through their words that they entice others, but rather through their licentiousness, which they hold out to others for the gratification of their fleshly indulgences. Those also with whom they succeed in this are

those who are just escaping from them that live in error; (19) promising them liberty, while they themselves are bond servants of corruption; for of ¹ whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. (20) For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of ² the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse

¹ Or, *what*.

² Many ancient authorities read *our*.

in reality only men who are scarcely ready to flee from those who are walking in vanities. These are then the newly converted, who have not yet separated themselves from the communion of the heathen life. Now, however, the Apostle mentions that haughty watchword which they have found in order to deceive such
 19 people. It is Christian liberty which they promise them, although they are themselves the servants of destruction, both temporal and eternal, of which they have become the victims through their actions. For it is certainly a generally recognized truth, that he who is conquered by another permanently becomes his slave. If they seek for the true Christian liberty in the licentiousness whereby they give themselves up to the enjoyment of passing things, they have become inwardly overpowered by these, and henceforth are held in servitude by their lusts for that which, through the corruption inherent in it, only bring destruction. But the very fact that these wicked persons described in the Epistle of Jude have already found this watchword, with which they cover over their doings, caused the Apostle to fear that they would in the future develop this into a formal heresy that would endanger souls. For this reason he now pronounces his final
 20 judgment upon these men. They, at their conversion, which implied a knowledge of Christ as their Lord and Saviour, had renounced such things of the world, which, by awakening sinful lusts in the natural man, polluted

II PETER

[III, 1

with them than the first. (21) For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. (22) It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, 'The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire.

III This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you ; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind

¹ Prov. xxvi. 11.

him with guilt. But if they now, being enticed by their allurements, again become involved in those things, and are overpowered in the struggle with the temptations that proceed from this source, in their case, as the Lord has said in Matt. xii. 45, the last state of these men is worse than the first. For their former Gentile conduct, as was shown by their conversion, still left open the possibility of escaping ; but their present final condition of servitude to these things no longer admits of this. For this reason it would be more 21 profitable for them never to have known the way that leads to righteousness, because then, according to Luke xii. 47, they would have received a lighter punishment than now, when, in spite of better knowledge, they had, through their return to their old sinful life, released themselves from their subjection to the law which comes from God and for this reason is holy, and enjoins upon them to walk upon the path of righteousness. And this injunction had already been given 22 to them. They have experienced what a true proverb says of a dog who has turned back to that which he has himself vomited ; and of a sow, which, after she had been washed, returned to her wallowing in the mire.

The Apostle declares emphatically that he is writing 1 already a second letter to the congregations of Asia Minor, but that at bottom the second has the same purpose as the first. If it had been his purpose in the first,

by putting you in remembrance; (2) that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: (3) knowing this first, that ¹in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, (4) and saying, Where is the promise of his ²coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they

¹ Gr. *in the last of the days.* ² Gr. *presence.*

by testifying of the redemptive facts already proclaimed to them to awaken their sincerity of mind (cf. 1 Pet. v. 12), it is his object now, by recalling the truth, which they certainly know, to call back to their memory the
 2 exhortation of the prophets, who had been consecrated to God, and were accordingly merely expressing the demands of the Lord; and also the command of their Lord and Saviour, which the present members of the congregation had received from Paul and from others, whom they specially honor as apostles. How necessary this was, they will recognize, if they first of all
 3 bear in mind that in the last days of the present time of redemption, which has now been inaugurated, those obedient to this command will be subjected to the greatest temptations. The Apostle is thinking of the mockers of the future, concerning whom Jude had already spoken in v. 18, and who will walk after their own lusts. But the real danger lies in the fact, that their mockery is directed against the Christian hope of the future, which, as was indicated at the opening of the letter, supplies the leading motive for striving after the Christian virtues. For as the entire Christian generation, in which those of the Apostolic age had expected the return of the Lord, had passed away, these
 4 men say: What has now become of His promised return, with which the end of the earth is to come? Since the fathers, who were then after a short sleep to be awakened, first fell asleep, everything remained

II PETER

[III, 5-7]

were from the beginning of the creation. (5) For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and ¹amidst water, by the word of God; (6) by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: (7) but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been ²stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

¹ Or, *through*.

² Or, *stored with fire*.

as it was, and as this has been the condition since the beginning of creation, certainly no change in the condition of the world, such as was to come with His return, can any longer be expected. It certainly can only have remained unknown to these mockers, 5 because they have desired that there shall be no return, at which they fear that they will have to give an account for their lustful lives, what lies clear before all as the counter-argument to their views. There were in the olden times already a heaven and an earth, which through the creative word of God had come forth from the waters of chaos. But as these had reached a permanent state only through the water, which at that creative word was divided into upper and lower waters, of which then again the waters were collected together into seas, and caused the dry land, called earth, to appear (Gen. i. 2, 7, 9), these, indeed, seemed to have the certainty of a permanent endurance. At that time it could certainly be said: "Everything remains as it was." And yet at that very time, through the waters of 6 the deep, out of which they had originally proceeded, and through the waters of the firmament, when the "windows of the heavens were opened" (cf. Gen. vii. 11), the world of that time was covered with a flood, and was destroyed. The present world, through the word 7 of promise given by God, according to which no deluge is any more to come over the earth (cf. Gen. ix. 11),

(8) But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (9) The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (10) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief;

is indeed protected against a destruction of this kind, and is preserved as a treasure, but only for the purpose of being reserved for a day of judgment, in which the godless men, and hence too these mockers, will be destroyed by the fire of God's wrath.

But here too the Apostle speaks of the dangers of the future, because they were being prepared for by the present. For as he wishes it not to be hidden from
 8 readers that, according to Ps. iv., human measurements of time have no significance with God, it will
 9 become clear at once that this is only because at that time already people began to speak of the delay of the return of Christ, which they claimed had been promised for that generation. What would it mean if even the entire present generation had passed away without Christ's return? This it was that had caused the Apostle to think of the fear indicated in v. 4. But how can they speak of a delay? Even if seemingly such a long period of time has passed by without Christ's return, with God this is certainly no long period, for with Him a thousand years is as one day. It surely cannot be regarded as a failure on God's part to fulfil His promise if He merely postpones its fulfilment, moved by His longsuffering, which would wait for the conversion of all men, and of which, as Peter does not fail to point out, they all stand in need. With this thought those of the Apostolic age were comforted when the return did not occur in the time in which it
 10 had been awaited with such certainty. For this reason

II PETER

[III, 11-18]

in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the ¹elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be ²burned up. (11) Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy living and godliness, (12) looking for and ³earnestly desiring the ⁴com-

¹ Or, *Heavenly bodies.* ² The most ancient manuscripts read *discovered.*
³ Or, *hastening.* ⁴ Gr. *presence.*

the Church has not lost faith in this return. For the day of the Lord will still come, writes Peter, in accordance with the word of the Lord in Matt. xxiv. 48. It will come like a thief entirely unexpected, and, for this reason, earlier than people believe. If the present world should be destroyed by the fire of divine judgment of wrath on that day, then the heavens will *pass* away, because the flames of the all-consuming fire will sweep over it like a storm, and even the firm foundation of the earth will be dissolved by the terrible heat. In reference to those future mockers, the Apostle asks, where shall the earth, with all its glory, whether that given it at the creation or added by man's hands, be found? The answer they themselves may give.

The Apostle introduces his final admonition with the 11 statement, that their life and conversation must needs be holy, in view of the future dissolution of all things, a consummation they are not to await in mere idleness. By a perfect change of heart they are to remove all occasions for further delay in the coming of 12 the great day of the Lord. For this is the day which God has appointed for the return of Christ and for His judgment, which will root out all the godless in the destruction of the world, and on account of which even the heavens and the eternal stars, which as such have nothing to do with the judgment, will be swallowed up in the fervent heat of the divine wrath. That the believers are to try to hasten the day of the destruction

ing of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the ¹elements shall melt with fervent heat? (13) But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

(14) Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight. (15) And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; (16) as also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as *they do* also the

¹ Or, *heavenly bodies*.

- 13 of the world, is clear from the fact, that in consequence of this catastrophe, according to Is. lxxv. 17-25, they are to expect a new world, in which righteousness reigns supreme. But from this it also follows that this
 14 expectation is to urge them on to new zeal to become spotless and free of guilt when the great catastrophe takes place, so as to meet it with a good conscience, because only then are they sure, that they will take part in this world of righteousness. If, then, our Lord Christ, who, according to v. 7, purposes only to carry
 15 out the will of God with the same longsuffering, still postpones this final judgment, they are to see in this only an opportunity for completing their conversion, and thereby attaining salvation. For this reason Paul the beloved brother of the Apostle himself, and of the fellow Apostles, in the so-called letter to the Ephesians, which was addressed to all the Christians in Asia Minor, has also delivered to them the same moral injunctions as appear in the present letter, according to
 16 the wisdom granted to him, as he does also in all of his Epistles, as far as these are known to Peter, when Paul speaks of the duties of the Christian in view of the expected day of judgment. It is true that in these letters there are many things hard to under-

II PETER

[III, 17-18]

other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (17) Ye therefore, beloved, knowing *these things* beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness. (18) But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and ¹ for ever. Amen.

¹Gr. *unto the day of eternity.* Ecclus. 18. 10.

stand, as when in Romans and Galatians he speaks of justification by faith alone, and of the freedom of the Christian from the law. This, certain persons, who are unskilled in interpretation of Pauline wisdom, and not firm in Christianity, and cannot interpret these things correctly, abuse and twist in accordance with their own false notions. No doubt he is here thinking of those teachers of carnal liberty whom he had controverted in the second chapter. But this obscurity is found also in other writings, which are an authority for the Christians, such as the books of the Old Testament, which are perverted by many through their prejudices in favor of the law. But in both cases they merely prepare for themselves the destruction intended for such persons. As the readers now know this beforehand, they are to be on their guard against being misled by their misrepresentations of Pauline teachings, so that they may not be dragged 17 away by the vain doctrines of such persons, who have cast aside all restraint of divine law, and fallen from the state of Christian faith and life, in which the readers stand. But these are rather to grow in grace, the in- 18 crease of which the Apostle has wished them in the beginning of his letter (cf. i. 2), and in the knowledge of our Lord and Redeemer Christ, who is there also mentioned as the source of this growth. The letter closes with the doxology to Christ, to whom the glory belongs, both now as also to all eternity, when there no longer will be any change of days, but only one day, which never ends.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

JOHN

I That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the ¹ Word of life (2) (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and

¹ Or, word. Comp. Acts 5. 20.

- 1** In the address, John does not mention himself by name, as is usually done in the beginning of Apostolic letters, any more than he does in his gospel; but he describes himself to be one who had been an eye and an ear witness of the life of Jesus. He emphasizes that what they had at that time heard, and what they had seen with their own eyes, and what they had learned when they had thoughtfully studied His divine words and deeds, which was made possible by the closest possible association with Him, and which every pressure of His hand confirmed, was not something that had been developed upon earth in the course of time, but something that had been such from eternity. He, concerning whom they learned these things, could be none other than the Eternal Word, in whom God had revealed Himself from the beginning, as He has revealed Himself in the historical appearance of Him, with whom they had stood in the closest personal relations. And this Word was the Word of life, because real spiritual life can only begin when we see God in Him
- 2** who has fully revealed Him. The Apostle interrupts himself to explain how he comes to designate the Eternal Word that had appeared in Jesus as that Word

bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us) ; (8) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us : yea, and our fellow-

without which there can be no real life Not only did such a Word not exist before that, but it was not even conceived of. Only to the eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus has such a word been made known through their own peculiar experience, so that they can also preach this truth. Only in Him, who lived entirely in His Father, in the constant contemplation of His being, in the constant fulfilment of His will, they learned to know a life which, because it had nothing in common with this transient earthly life, was by its very nature eternal, i. e. could not pass away. But Jesus had Himself so often referred to a life which from the beginning He had lived with the Father, in which He had seen Him and heard Him, a life that in this way had no beginning and could also have no end, and thus only in Christ had such a truly eternal life been made known to them as they now proclaim.

Only now can the Apostle return to his starting 8 point; for what the witnesses have seen and heard, this they also communicate to their readers in their preaching. Nor does John directly describe the circle to whom he is writing, as this is generally done in the beginning of Apostolic letters ; but he characterizes it as one among whom he and other eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus have been laboring, and still are laboring. The very purpose of this continuous proclamation on their part, is none other than that the readers, through the possession of the same knowledge concerning the Eternal Word that had appeared in Christ, may have communion with the eyewitnesses, as these have with

ship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: (4)
and these things we write, that ¹our joy may be made full.

¹ Many ancient authorities read *your*.

each other. But John must also say why this communion with them is a matter of such great importance that it can constitute the purpose of all their activity among the readers. For this communion of the eyewitnesses with each other, in which the readers, through the activity of the Apostles, are to take part, is nothing less than a communion with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ Himself. For he who has learned to see in Christ the perfect revelation of God, cannot do otherwise than stand in communion with Him, and through Him with His Father, because all his thought and actions henceforth are determined by the Spirit of God, which has become manifest to him, 4 as the disciples have seen this first in Jesus. And this brings the Apostle to state the purpose of his writing. For the first time he mentions his own person, distinct from the eyewitnesses, of whom he had so far been speaking: but this is done, as is seen by the "we" only, on the presupposition, that each one of these, if he were called upon to write to them, would write the same thing, and for the same purpose. But this statement concerning the real purpose of the letter says nothing else than what is generally expressed by the blessing with which the Apostolic letters usually begin. For if John through his letter wishes the joy to be made complete, which he has in the past had in the communion with the readers, and which has been brought about by his preaching, this means, that by this letter he purposes nothing else than that this communion shall be perfectly realized. This is, then, his highest wish for them, to the realization of which this Epistle is to serve.

(5) And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth :

The introduction to the Epistle consists of a consideration of what the readers possess in their Christian estate and what follows for them from this. The Apostle connects his thoughts directly with what he has said above concerning the purpose of the Apostolic 5 proclamation in general, by adding what the contents of this proclamation are. This is nothing else than the reproduction of the message, which the Apostles heard from Christ Himself, and the central thought of it was this, that with His appearance, God had become light, i. e. had been revealed perfectly ; because He reflects God's essence in all directions, and even the innermost essence of God. For after He had appeared in Christ, there is nothing of Him that remains dark or unintelligible. But the necessary consequence of their message for all who hear, is the walk in the light and the full revelation of God. As the proclamation of this 6 revelation has the purpose of bringing all who hear it into the living communion with God, the claim to possess this communion, in case we yet walk in an unenlightened condition, is absolutely false. For we must know, that we cannot have communion with the God who has been revealed in Christ, i. e. has become light, and at the same time walk in darkness. In this case men no longer speak the truth, nor do they live up to the truth, since he who does not permit himself to be enlightened in his knowledge by the truth, i. e. by the true essence of God which is revealed in Christ, will also not permit himself to be determined thereby in his actions. If God henceforth, i. e. since

(7) but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin,

7 the appearance of Christ, is no longer enveloped in darkness, but stands before us in the full light that shines forth from the revelation through Christ, then we must walk in that light, and in a state of enlightenment. Only in this case do we have part in the mutual communion of the enlightened, which, as the Apostle has said above, is nothing else than the communion with God in Christ. Only in this Christian communion, then, have we also a part in the highest good itself, in the cleansing from every pollution of guilt, which defiles us on account of sin. For the communion with God, to which the Christian communion is to lead us, is not at all possible, as long as we are yet polluted by the guilt of sin, since the Holy Spirit can have no communion with the unclean sinner. For this reason the blood of Jesus constantly cleanses us from all pollution of guilt in the Christian communion, so that the Son, not only through His revelation of God but also through His atonement of all our sins by His sacrificial death, has made the communion with God possible for us; but in this communion with God we only partake when we walk in the light of God's revelation.

Why the Apostle emphasizes especially the great blessing of the forgiveness of sins, which we obtain in the Christian communion alone, becomes clear at once, when he subsequently explains that the first thing that we learn to know in the perfect revelation of God is our own sinfulness. We cannot learn to know God as He has been revealed in His innermost nature through Christ, without becoming conscious of our own

8 impurity and sinfulness. If we say that we have no

we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

sin, then we are betaking ourselves upon a wrong way that is dangerous to our souls, because we then think that we do not need any forgiveness of sins, and we accordingly cannot attain such forgiveness. In this case the truth, which would first of all lay bare our sins, is not in us, and we are yet in our unenlightened state. But we need not fear, that this knowledge of our sins will make our participation in the communion 9 of God a matter of doubt. For in the light of this revelation of God we learn that God is faithful, and accordingly keeps the promise of the forgiveness of sins, which He has given us in Jesus; and that He is just, and accordingly treats differently him who confesses his sins from him who claims that he has no sins. Whereas He retains the sins in the latter case, He forgives the former and thereby cleanses him from all that which his state of pleasing God yet lacks because of his sins. This then is what the Apostle desired to say, 10 namely, that the first sign of a walk in the light is the consciousness of sin. If we claim that we have no sin, we then assuredly make God Himself a liar, who, after He has in Christ sent the general message of the forgiveness of sins, declares, that all stand in need of such forgiveness, since all are sinners. But in this case the word of God, which, as Christ has proclaimed it to us, is a message concerning our sins and His grace, is not in us; then all talk of our being in a Christian estate is a lie.

But there is also a second sign of a walk in the light,

II My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an ¹ Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : (2) and he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. (3) And hereby we know that we know

¹ Or, *Comforter*. Jn. 14. 16. Or, *Helper*. Gr. *Paraclete*.

- 1 and that is the fact that we cease sinning. For this reason, everything that he, the venerable father, would write for his beloved children, has as its purpose, that they cease to commit even single sins, the inconsistency of which with the Christian state is so often overlooked. In their striving for this, they need not be discouraged by the fact, that, the better they learn to know themselves in the light of the revelation, all the surer, do they know, too, that notwithstanding their Christian state, they will be constantly found as having committed single sins. For we have in the Christ, who has been exalted to God, one who assists us with the Father, by putting in intercessions for us before the Judge. He can do this, because He as the Just One needs no intercessions for Himself ; and He does this, because He is
- 2 the Author of the act of atonement that took place in His sacrificial death, whereby all our sins are covered in the eyes of God. In fact, His intercession is at bottom nothing else but the putting into force of the atonement that He rendered to God. Should we doubt whether this would suffice for our sins, also for those, which we commit even after our attainment of the Christian state, then we are to remember, that Christ has covered in the eyes of God not merely our sins, but those also of the entire sinful world, and that there cannot be any kind of new transgression in our Christian state, from which we may not be cleansed by the
- 3 blood of Christ. But this yet remains a fact, that sin as such is absolutely irreconcilable with the Christian

him, if we keep his commandments. (4) He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; (5) but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we

state, as this state should be. We already have heard that we can be in the Christian state only if we walk in the light of the revelation of God in Christ (i. 7). But that a person has really learned to know God in this state and has permanently done so, can certainly only be recognized by the fact, that he keeps His commandments. For with the knowledge of God, the knowledge of His will is also given, as this is expressed in His commandments, and this too as a will that is absolutely binding, so that the non-observance of this will, i. e. sinning, is out of the question. But this is so 4 clear, that he who claims that he has learned to know God and yet does not keep His commandments, is a liar, who knowingly speaks the untruth. This already shows that the truth is not at all in him, as this would have prevented him from uttering a manifest falsehood. On the other hand, he who does not only now and then keep a commandment of God, when it happens to suit 5 his convenience, but observes His word as such, which includes all of His commandments, this man shows not only that he has learned to know Him, but also, that this knowledge has produced love for God, and that indeed, this love has become perfect in him; for love is not satisfied unless it does everything that the beloved one asks. The Old Testament already teaches that love to God is the source of all obedience to Him, as it puts this commandment at the head of all the others (cf. Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxii. 37, 38). By this love which absolutely keeps the word of God, we know, that a person is in God; for it is a mark of love only

know that we are in him : (6) he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

(7) Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning ; the old commandment is the word which ye heard. (8) Again, a

to live so entirely in another, that we draw from him also all the impulses of our actions. This being in God is, however, nothing but the communion with God, to which the proclamation of the gospel would lead us (cf. i. 3). And this is incompatible with walking in the darkness (cf. i. 6), because if we have really learned to know God in the light of His revelation, then of a necessity giving ourselves up entirely to Him, we love
6 and obey Him. But whosoever says, that he abides in God, that he accordingly not only now and then gives himself up to His word, but stands in a permanent relation to Him, which belongs to the essence of the Christian state, that person is in duty bound also to prove this. But the proof of this can be easily furnished. For Jesus has said of Himself, that He is in the Father and the Father in Him, and it is accordingly necessary to walk also as He walked, and then there can no doubt arise of our being in God or of having learned to know God, because of our walking in the light.

7 The command that is drawn from the revelation of God in Christ to know and to avoid sins, concerning which John has spoken in the preceding, is by no means to be regarded as a new commandment, but as an old one, which they have had from the beginning of their Christian life. For that the proclamation of the message of redemption, with the hearing of which Christian life begins, includes this double command, since it includes walking in the light, was as they knew, the subject of his first discussion. But they can also

new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth. (9) He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now.

look at the matter in another way. They can say that he is writing them a new commandment. This is true in reference to Christ, because with the revelation of God in Him, and with the demand which this includes, something absolutely new has come into the world. But this is true also in their case, although this commandment was already contained from the beginning in the proclamation of redemption that had been made to them; for the command is determined for them in particular by every new condition in their surroundings, and thereby, becomes something new. But their present surroundings John described by stating that the darkness, i. e. the condition of the world which is not enlightened, is already at the point of disappearing, and that the true light which appears in Christ already shines in the world. Thus there is already a congregation of the light in contradistinction to the unenlightened world. This fact the Apostle makes the theme of his second introductory discussion; by again drawing the conclusions which result from this, and the first of these is the duty of brotherly love. For in the light of the perfect revelation of God, which teaches us to know God as our Father, we certainly must recognize all the members of the congregation as our brethren; and since, as a self-evident fact, brothers love each other, it is an absolute contradiction if a person claims to be in the light, i. e. to belong to the circle in whom the light already shines, and yet hate his brother. Such a person, on the contrary, is still in darkness, because he has not yet

(10) He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. (11) But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.

- even recognized him as his brother, as he would have
10 done in the light of the revelation of God. On the other hand, he who loves his brother shows thereby, that he is a real member of the congregation of the light, not for the purpose, perchance, of coming near the light for once, but that he remains in the light, since this light teaches him to recognize his fellow-Christian as a brother, and to treat him as such. Just as in the bodily life, only the light prevents the traveller from stumbling and falling, which is unavoidable in the darkness; thus, too, all the absence of light, i. e. every failure to recognize the fraternal relation to the members of the congregation, would cause a violation of one's duty toward them. This would not be the case if he permanently loved his brother, and for this reason such love proves that he is abiding in his light.
11 But, on the other hand, he who hates his brother, is in darkness, and, as has been pointed out above, he lives without the light, in which state he will not only stumble, but will lose his way and bearings, because the darkness blinds the eye, so that it can no longer see. For this very reason the Apostle has at once set up against the love of the brethren its sharpest antithesis, namely, the hatred, of the brethren, since thereby it is shown with the most marked distinctness that the latter can take place only in the most unenlightened state, in which a person can no longer find the way to his first and most natural duty.

Before the Apostle draws his second conclusion from

(12) I write unto you, *my* little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. (13) I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. ¹ I have written unto you, little children, because

¹ Or, *I wrote*.

his new theme, he must first show, that his readers really belong to the congregation of the light; for otherwise the demands that he addresses to them would be meaningless for them. For this reason he states, 12 that he is writing to the readers, whom he again addresses as dear children, because their sins have been forgiven for the sake of that name which characterizes Christ as the Mediator of our redemption, because as such He has secured the atonement of our sins (v. 5). But that the members of the Christian communion, and this means the congregation of the light, have the forgiveness of sins, we hear already in i. 7. But now there are also other marks of membership in this congregation to be found in the different classes among them. Those who are advanced in years, in accordance 18 with their spiritual maturity, will have penetrated into the deepest mystery of the being of Christ, into His original state from the beginning. It will be particularly the work of those who stand in the full power of youth, if the congregation has overcome the Devil, as it was their power and energy, which compelled the prophets for false liberty (cf. 2 Pet. ii. 19) to depart, through whom the Devil tempted also the congregation of the readers. True, the Apostle states, that he not only addresses the demands that he now intends to write, to the readers as the congregation of the light, but that he has also directed his first demands to them as such. For he bases the duty of brotherly love on the fact, that they all have learned to recognize God as their

ye know the Father. (14) ¹ I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. ¹ I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one. (15) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father

¹ Or, *I wrote*.

- Father, as they all have experienced His fatherly love in the forgiveness of sins, which they have received.
- 14 In reference to the fathers of the congregation, he merely repeats what he has already said; but in reference to the youth, he yet adds, that the power by which they have overcome the Devil naturally did not originate in themselves, but came from the word of God, which remained in them and had made them strong for the permanent resistance in their struggle with the Devil.

- Only now comes the second conclusion, which the Apostle draws from the fact, that, in opposition to the congregation of the light in the present condition, there is found strongly drawn up the unbelieving world in its hostility to God, among whom darkness yet rules supreme. As the duty of brotherly love follows from this condition of affairs as a matter of necessity, so, on the other hand, the duty of not loving the
- 15 world follows. In this case, naturally the Apostle is thinking of the world as such, in so far as it is the world and will remain such. For this reason the Apostle expressly adds, that he means here particularly the carnal tendencies and impulses that rule in the world, as also the sins and unbelief of the world, because the inclination to these things often hides itself behind the love of certain persons as such. But the love for the world in the sense he here means, is absolutely incompatible with the love for God, whom the congregation recognizes as their Father (v. 8), and whom they love

is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

(v. 5), because they cannot at the same time love God and the people of the world, who are hostile to God. This antithesis is shown all the more by a reference to 16 the leading sensual tendencies that prevail in the world. For the lusts of the flesh, which in the people of the world ignore all divinely-appointed restraints, even if they do merely what Jesus already in Matt. v. 28 declared to be equally sinful, namely, want to feast their eyes on the forbidden object of their pleasure, as also the boasting which the man of the world practises in the possessions that have been given him for the support of his life, as though these were his own acquisition or property which raises him above those who have less, all of these things do not come from the Father, but from the godless work of the men of the world. For this reason the love of these things makes impossible the love to the Father, because the child can love only what comes from its father. The contrast between the two communions, which nobody can possibly love at the same time, will, however, appear in its full reality in the end. For sinful mankind is destroyed in the judgment with all 17 of their characteristic lusts, while he who does the will of God, and thereby proves that he is a member of the congregation of the light, will remain to eternity.

The third of the introductory discussions treats of the Christian state of the readers from a new point of view. Not only have they the full revelation of God, (cf. i. 5), and this is already operative in them as a congregation of the light (cf. ii. 8), but the end is also im-

II, 18-20] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

(18) Little children ; it is the last hour : and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists ; whereby we know that it is the last hour. (19) They went out from us, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us ; but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest¹ that they are not of us. (20) And ye have an anointing from the Holy One,² and

¹ Or, *that not all are of us.* ² Some very ancient authorities read *and ye all know.*

- 18 mediately impending. Just as every day has its fixed number of hours, thus, too, the day of this world period has ; and the time in which the readers are living is proved to be the last hour, through the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning the Antichrist, who is to come just before the end. Formerly the Apostle in his Apocalypse had expected the revelation of this Antichrist, i. e. the extreme personification of the anti-Christian wickedness, of which the readers have heard, in the person of a world ruler, who would persecute the Christians. Now it has become apparent, that by far greater dangers threaten the congregation in the heresies that have sprung up in their own midst, each of which embodies this anti-Christian hostility. For it is not possible more effectively to destroy the work of Christ upon earth than by destroying though false doctrines the true knowledge of the being of Christ, with which perfect redemption has been given us. It certainly seems incomprehensible that such heretics should
- 19 have come out from the congregation. In reality they have never inwardly belonged to the congregation, for otherwise they would not have also separated themselves outwardly from the congregation, as these heretics have done. But it was the divine counsel, that by such a separation it should become manifest, that not all who externally belong to the congregation really also
- 20 belong to it inwardly. For all those who really be-

ye know all things. (21) I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and ¹ because no lie is of the truth. (22) Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, *even* he that denieth the Father and the Son. (23) Whosoever denieth the

¹ Or, *that*

long to the congregation, as is the case with the readers, possess the anointing oil; for the Holy God, as once to His Son, has in baptism anointed them with His Spirit, and has consecrated them to become His own possession. But as such they all really know the truth. The Apostle has written as he did concerning the Antichrist, not because they do not know the truth, but for the very reason that they do know it; for only as such can they understand that the lies of these heretics, like every lie, do not come from the truth, which the congregation possesses, and that accordingly those heretics never really belonged to the congregation.

He calls these heretics liars, because there cannot be a more dangerous liar than he who denies that the historical Jesus is the heavenly Christ, i. e. is the Son of God, who from the beginning was appointed to be the Mediator of salvation. The heretics, too, speak of a heavenly Christ, but they deny that He has appeared in the man Jesus, and claim, that He had only temporarily been joined with Him. But this is the greatest embodiment of the anti-Christian wickedness, in which it remains a matter of indifference if it appears in one person or in a larger number of heretics. For every one of these, by denying the Son, denies the Father also, and in this sense becomes an infidel, wherein is found the acme of wickedness. For if Christ is not the Son coequal with the Father, then He cannot also be the complete revelation of the Father, and we do not

Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also. (24) As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father. (25) And this is the promise which he promised ¹us, even the life eternal. (26) These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray. (27) And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any

¹ Some ancient authorities read you.

- at all have such a revelation. Only he who recognizes in Him the Son, sees and possesses also the Father.
- 24 From this the first exhortation follows, which their present condition impresses upon the readers. The message of the complete revelation of God that has appeared in Christ, which from the beginning of their Christian life has belonged to them, must remain in them. For only if this for all times remains the determining power of their spiritual lives, will they, too, with all of their being and life, with all of their thought and endeavors, give themselves up entirely to the Son, because they have found in Him the complete revelation of God and thereby, too, the Father Himself, so that now only they have attained the perfect revelation
- 25 of God. But thereby that perfect redemption has been given which God has promised them in the sending of His Son, because in their contemplation of God in Christ, they already possess all the blessings of eternal
- 26 life. For this reason he has written to them concerning these heretics, who through their false teachings would rob them of this eternal happiness. Not as though they did not know this, because they are in
- 27 possession of the oil of anointing, of which he had spoken above, i. e. of the Holy Ghost, whom they have received from God. They do not need any more human instruction, because this Spirit, who comes

one teach you ; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, ¹and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ²ye abide in him. (28) And now, *my* little children, abide in him ; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed ³before him at his ⁴coming. (29) If ye know that he is righteous, ⁵ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him.

¹ Or, so it is true and is no lie ; and even as, &c. ² Or, abide ye.
³ Gr. from him. ⁴ Gr. presence. ⁵ Or, know ye.

from the God of truth, instructs them concerning all things, and teaches them only the truth, and no lies of any kind. His purpose had only been to admonish them to remain in God as the Spirit had taught them.

The Apostle again takes up the admonition with which he had closed, in order to show how that this was justified by the conditions of the times. For if now, since the last hour had arrived, as he has shown, the final and highest revelation of God is immedi- 28
 ately at hand, in which He is to reveal Himself as the One who brings the consummation of redemption through the return of Christ, then certainly we can await this only with joy, providing He finds us to be those who have remained in Him. For otherwise we would be compelled to withdraw in shame, and to hide ourselves before Him when He comes back in Christ as the returning Messiah. For so much the 29
 reader must have learned in the preceding revelation of God, that He is just, and that He accordingly must treat those who have remained in Him differently from those who have not done so. But this remaining in Him can only be recognized by having experienced the effects of grace, which are the consequence of the abiding living in God, i. e. experiencing a new and divine life in God. But then they also learn, that only he who practises the righteousness which the just Judge demands because it is His own essence, is be-

III Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if ¹he shall be manifested, we shall be like him;

¹ Or, *it*.

gotten of God, and accordingly can await the judgment with joy.

- 1 For the greatest love which God, as the Father, who has revealed His love for us in Christ, has actually now exhibited toward us, lies in the fact that He has begotten those of us who are in Him unto a new life, so that henceforth we can be called His children because we are like unto Him. And, thanks be to God, the Apostle exclaims, who has called upon the readers to contemplate the greatness of this love of God, we are such children. The fact that the world, in its hostility to God, does not recognize us as such is not strange, as it has not learned to know God, and accordingly cannot know those who, as His children, are like Him. The near approach of the consummation of salvation suggests the question, what we, who are the children of God, will then become. This has not yet been made known; only so much is clear, that if we now are similar to God, we will be entirely like unto Him when this has been revealed. For if the present seeing of Christ already, in consequence of which we abide in Him and have experienced this being begotten by God, has made us like unto Him, how then, when we see Him as He is, in the heavenly communion with God, shall this not bring us to the highest consummation of moral similarity to Him?

- 2 Now John comes to a suitable point at which to deliver directly the second admonition, which he intends to give to his readers in their present condition, in view of this approaching consummation of redemp-

for we shall see him even as he is. (3) And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (4) Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. (5) And ye know that he was manifested to

tion, and for which he has been preparing since ii. 29. Everybody, whose hope for the realization of this consummation rests upon God, who cannot do enough for us to satisfy His love until He has brought 8 us to this final goal, will cleanse himself from all uncleanness that would hinder him from approaching God, and accordingly from partaking of this heavenly communion with God, because he certainly knows, that Christ already sees the face of God, only because He is absolutely pure. But everybody who commits sin is 4 unclean. At that time there was a lawlessness within Christianity, which hid itself under the beautiful name of Christian Liberty, and which the congregation itself had condemned by excluding those who proclaimed this doctrine (cf. to. ii. 13, 14). But every sin in its real essence is lawlessness, so that everybody who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness, because it is rebellion against the standard of conduct according to which the just Judge will finally pass sentence. But what purity 5 is has been made manifest in the case of Jesus, as the readers themselves know, since nobody can believe, that He took our sins away through His atoning death without knowing also that there was no sin in Him. For only He who is without sin can cover the sins of others in the eyes of God. But for this very reason, because He, in His atoning death, has cleansed us from all the pollution of sin, He has not only become an example of purity from sin, but has made this purity possible for all who abide in Him. For everyone who centers in Him does not commit sin. This statement does

¹ take away sins ; and in him is no sin. (6) Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither ² knoweth him. (7) *My* little children, let no man lead you astray : he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous : (8) he that doeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

¹ Or, *bear sins.*

² Or, *hath known.*

- 6 not admit of any limitation, nor does it need any. It only follows from this, that everybody who yet sins has not seen Him, as the eyewitnesses have, as the one who in His sinless state atones for us, or has learned this from their proclamation. Only through this constant abiding in Him, the Mediator of our redemption, can sin really be overpowered ; only from the faith in the message of redemption can a new morality come forth.
- 7 That at this place the letter proper begins, and that the three introductory considerations were only a preparation for it, is clear from the fact that now, for the first time, a direct warning is uttered against a certain danger, which the entire letter was intended to avert. At that time there were some who, evidently through a misunderstanding of Paul's teaching, and because they desired to be justified by faith, declared that they no longer had any sin (cf. i. 8 sqq.), and that they no longer required any striving after righteousness (cf. ii. 7 sqq.). In opposition to these, the Apostle maintains that the state of being justified must prove itself by the doing of righteousness (naturally in the most comprehensive sense of all that is commanded by God), since the righteousness of Jesus also consisted
- 8 in the constant exercise of righteousness. He who commits sin, and this is always the case if a person does not practise righteousness, is determined by the Devil in all his doings, because the latter made a beginning of sinning, and is accordingly the active

(9) Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. (10) In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

cause of all sinning. But if a person should hold that the Devil causes all sin, and that all lack of righteousness must accordingly come from him, and that no one is to blame for sin, he would overlook the fact that, in order to make this very causing to sin on the part of the Devil impossible, the Son of God has been made known as such. For in the case of him who sees in Him the full revelation of God, and accordingly abides in the Son and in the Father, sin is out of the question. Now we see, why already in the last introductory consideration, the Apostle had so expressly pointed to our being begotten of God, which was the consequence of our abiding in God through Christ. For he who is begotten of God, and remains in this state, does not commit sin, because the seed of God, out of which he is begotten, namely, the word of the message of salvation, which interprets to us the revelation of God in Christ, abides in him and makes it impossible for him to sin, since he has thereby been permanently begotten of God (cf. on iii. 6). But, in this case, the difference between the children of God, in the sense of iii. 1, and the children of the Devil, who in all their doings are determined by the Devil, is clear, because the child must be similar to its father. But he who does not practise righteousness is by God not determined in all things, who judges all things by the standard of righteousness (cf. ii. 29).

Or, in order to mention another and plainer evidence of being children of God, he states that he who does

III, 11-15] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

(11) For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; (12) not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

(13) Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you. (14) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death.

(15) Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know

- not love his brother is not of God. They have certainly heard, from the beginning of their Christian
- 11 career, that the message of God to us demands, that we shall love each other, since the second introductory consideration had already described this as a work of those who walk in the full revelation of God (cf. ii. 9, 10).
- 12 This can be seen in the case of Cain, who slew his brother for no other reason than because he was controlled by him who is the absolute evil, i. e. the Devil, and that his deeds, which emanated from this source, were evil, and accordingly stood in irreconcilable antagonism to the good works of his brother. This they see daily in the hatred of the world, which is hostile to God, against themselves, which hatred accordingly
- 14 is not a surprising matter. On the other hand, they possess in the brotherly love that prevails in their midst, the best proof that through the seeing of God in Christ, the results of which are the abiding in God, and the being begotten anew through Him, they had gone over from the death of the natural man to the new life in the communion with God. For he who does not love shows thereby that he is in that condition of death. John, guided by the words of the Lord
- 15 (cf. Matt. v. 22), deducts this statement from the statement that every one who hates his brother is already the murderer of a human being; for whether the hatred is permitted to develop into murder or not de-

that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. (16) Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (17) But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the

pende often solely upon external circumstances. Since, now, every murderer of a human being, according to the consciences of mankind in general, is punishable by death, then a man who hates his brother cannot have an abiding life in him, and a life that to end in death is not an eternal life in reality. As the essence of hatred 16 consists in the effort to destroy the brother, thus the essence of love, as has been made manifest in Christ, is to give one's own life for the brethren, and thus our love must be in accordance with the example of Jesus. But if, on the other hand, one who has the possessions necessary for this life, which certainly, as compared with the life that one gives up for the brethren, are insignificant things, and yet, in view of the apparent need 17 of the brother, violently closes his heart, which as it were, opens of itself from compassion, in order, under all circumstances, not to be forced to give up any of his goods, such a person cannot possibly have this love for the brother. But the Apostle goes one step further. In such a person there can also be no love of God, which would incite him to obey His commandments (ii. 5), and accordingly especially to obey the commandment to love the brother also.

Evidently those who thought that they needed nothing more than their justification through faith appealed to the fact, that this was the only ground of our certainty of redemption, since the doing of righteousness that flowed from justification was at all times imperfect. In reply to this the Apostle connects the ad-

love of God abide in him? (18) *My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.* (19) *Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall*¹ *assure our heart*² *before him: (20) because if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. (21) Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have*

¹ Gr. *persuade*. Comp. Mt. 28. 14.

² Or, *before him. whereinsoever our heart condemn us; because God, &c.*

- 18 monition with the preceding, that our love, by which, as he had said, we could judge if we are the children of God and if we are in the state of grace in general, must naturally be a true love. The love that shows itself in a word of sympathy can still be the expression of real kindly feelings, even if it does not give any real help to the needy, while the sympathy that is expressed only by the lips is absolute hypocrisy. Only the love that shows itself in actual deeds is a
- 19 true love. And thereby we can in reality know that
- 20 we are in the truth, i. e. that the being of God which has been revealed in Christ, and thereby God Himself determines us, and that accordingly we are also in that state of redemption which is characteristic of the children who have been begotten of God. But it may be averred that our heart charges us with many transgressions and weaknesses, and thereby condemns us, and accordingly makes us doubt our state of grace. However. if we, as it were, hold a conversation with our heart in the presence of God, i. e. in our self-examination act as though God were present, we will convince our heart that the omniscient God is greater than our hearts, and accordingly He knows that we are of the truth, if we only truly exercise love, even in case we ourselves, on account of our sins of weakness,
- 21 doubt if we are in the state of grace. But if our heart does not make any accusation, be this because it is absolutely certain of its being in the state of grace, or be

boldness toward God ; (22) and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. (23) And this is his commandment, that we should ¹believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us command. (24) And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him,

¹ Gr. *believe the name.*

it that it has become sure of this fact in the way just described, then, indeed, we have the joyful confidence in God, and can at any moment test the correctness of this confidence in the hearing of our prayer. For God hears only him who keeps His commandments (cf. John ix. 81) ; and only he who does what is pleasing before His countenance can at all times be sure of His gracious presence, and thereby, too, of the fact that his prayer will be heard (cf. John viii. 29). 22

John comes at length to the chief point in the matter. This onesided conception of the doctrine of justification is ever placed in contrast to good works. But the commandments of God, upon the keeping of which our state of grace depends, are, as is well known, comprehended in the command of faith, as also of love. For God, indeed, demands faith of us in the fact, that Jesus Christ is, in truth, what the name Son of God implies. It is He in whom God has completely revealed Himself. He demands this first, because Christ has given us the commandment of love, and no one can fulfil this command who is not convinced that Christ's command, for the very reason that He is the Godlike Son, is the commandment of God Himself. John accordingly thinks that he is in nowise detracting from the fundamental significance of faith when, in the keeping of the divine commands, and especially in love, he sees the proof of our being in the state of grace. 24 He can accordingly very well say, as he has done in ii. 5, that by the keeping of the commandments of God,

and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us.

IV Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God ; because many false prophets

we can recognize the fact that we are abiding in God. But he here yet adds the other side of our communion with God, namely, that God is in us, as Christ had at all times described His communion with God, that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. For this is the nature of the case, to him who with all his thoughts and actions abides in God, God becomes the center of his entire spiritual life, and determines him in everything, and herein also causes him to obey His commandments. It will, then, be the real purpose of this letter to show how, from the being of God within us, and only from this, the fulfilment of this double commandment, that of faith, as also that of love, flows ; and these accordingly then can furnish the guarantee of the being of God in us, and are the ground of the certainty of our salvation. But in this matter the Apostle proceeds first from the experience, that God has given us His Spirit, because we can most surely learn from the being of His Spirit in us, that He, too, is in us ; and he will accordingly have to prove, that our faith, as also our love, comes from the Spirit, and only from Him.

First, then, the proof must be furnished that faith can be worked in us only through God, or, more definitely, through the Spirit of God. In the form of an earnest admonition, the Apostle first reminds his
1 readers, that they certainly cannot believe any and every spirit, or that it is the truth if such a spirit claims to be of God ; but rather, that it is necessary, to examine and to see if it is really of God. For, as a mat-

are gone out into the world. (2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God : every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in

ter of fact, there are also many false prophets, who falsely claim, when they begin their public activity, to be under the impulse of the divine Spirit, although, in reality, they are moved by an anti-divine spirit. But, of course, they need some standard on which to base such an examination ; and this standard the Apostle gives to them. This is the confession of Jesus Christ as the One who has become flesh. For this is the fundamental fact of redemption, without the acceptance of which the Apostle will not recognize anything as Christianity. If Jesus, as He had appeared in human flesh and blood, was not the Christ who had been promised, and who had lived from eternity, then, too, He was not the Son coequal with the Father, in whom they heard and saw the Father, and accordingly could see the full revelation of God. But the Apostle expressly speaks of confession. The Spirit can certainly only confess with the mouth, if He moves a man to make such a confession. But in this case He must first of all awaken in him faith in these redemptive facts, and that, too, such a joyful, confident faith, that the recipient cannot do otherwise than to confess it in the presence of others. And with this the Apostle has already proved what he desired to prove, namely, that the Spirit from God, and thereby God Himself, alone produces faith in the name of Jesus Christ, which fulfils the first fundamental commandment (iii. 23). But the occasion for openly confessing this faith is not given, unless we are to uphold it over against some opposition to it. And for this reason he has here in mind not the first beginnings of this faith, but that faith which directly opposes the claims of these false prophets. For

the flesh is of God : (3) and every spirit that ¹ confesseth not Jesus is not of God : and this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh ; and now it is in the world already. (4) Ye are of God, *my* little children, and have

¹ Some ancient authorities read *annulleth Jesus*.

8 that the spirit which incites the latter is not of God, can be recognized by the fact, that it does not confess the Jesus who is confessed by the congregation. The matter here involved is not what they say concerning Him, or what ideas they entertain concerning this Jesus, whether they, perchance, believe that He had temporarily joined Himself to a heavenly creature, which they call Christ; but with the denial of the incarnation of the eternal God-equal-Son in Jesus, who only for this reason exists and is called the Christ, i. e. the Mediator of redemption, they deny also the Jesus of history, who has brought us redemption, and they put in His place an imaginary picture, which surely can do us no good. For this very reason this spirit is the spirit of the Antichrist; for there can be no more decisive enmity to the true Christ than when we dethrone Him who really is the Christ, in order to set an imaginary image of a Christ upon His throne. They have certainly heard of the Antichrist, in whom the hostility to Christ finds its highest expression. And now, in that spirit which moves these false prophets, this acme of hostility has been realized, and in them the Antichrist has appeared.

4 But that the readers are of God, from whom has come to them the Spirit, who teaches them to know Jesus as these heretics do not know Him, is clear from the fact, that they have overcome these heretics, i. e. have forced them out of the congregation. For in this anti-Christian spirit it was the Devil, of course, who came to tempt them, in order to lead them astray ; but

overcome them : because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. (5) They are of the world : therefore speak they *as* of the world, and the world heareth them. (6) We are of God : he that knoweth God heareth us ; he who

God alone is greater in power than he, and accordingly it must have been He who impelled them, in opposition to these false teachings, to cling to the faithful confession, and in these false prophets to overcome the Devil himself. This expulsion of these false prophets from 5 the congregation shows, that these men had never really belonged to the congregation (cf. ii. 19), but to the world in its hostility to God, in which the Devil rules supreme. For this reason their doctrine, too, comes from the world, which has, as they know, its own wisdom that is opposed to God, and the world heeds this wisdom, because it belongs to those things which the world, according to the word of the Lord (cf. John xv. 19), loves. The Apostles, on the other hand, who 6 proclaim the incarnate Christ, are of God, as is seen from the fact that everybody who, through the seeing of God in Christ has come to this knowledge, listens to them, and only those, who have not seen Him in Christ, and in consequence of this are, in their innermost being, not determined by God, do not listen to them. For as the former, through their inner sympathy with the Apostles, who, like them, are in their hearts determined by God, listen to their proclamation, which urges them to hold fast to the confession, thus the latter have no capacity at all for understanding this proclamation. But by this they again recognize the difference between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. The Spirit, who moves those who have learned to know God, can only be the Spirit of truth ; but the spirit which moves the world to heed the false

is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

(7) Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.

(8) He that loveth not knoweth not God ; for God is love.

prophets, is the spirit of error. For this reason the hearers, in their listening to the Apostles, as also in their clinging to the confession of the Jesus whom they are proclaiming, have the guarantee that they are in the state of grace, because God Himself, who is Himself in them through His Spirit of truth, moves them to fulfil the first fundamental command of faith in the name of the Son of God. For without this faith they would not listen to the Apostles, nor accept their teachings.

- 7 The proof also that the fulfilment of the second half of this double commandment (iii. 23), namely, the commandment of love, can come only from the Spirit, whom God has given us, and the possession of whom makes us certain of the fact that God is in us, and thereby, too, of our state of grace, the Apostle begins to give, in the form of an admonition to love one another, as it is his purpose at all places not so much to give doctrinal expositions as rather to influence the Christian life of his readers. But he at once goes over to the consideration of the fact, that this mutual love comes from God, as all love does, and hence must have learned to know God, which is the necessary condition of being begotten of God. But all Christian knowledge, as we know, comes from the Spirit (cf. ii. 20, 11-27) ; so that the fulfilment of the commandment of love comes from the fact that we are begotten of God, and, as its ultimate source, from the knowledge of God,
- 8 which is the product of the Spirit. He who does not

(9) Herein was the love of God manifested¹ in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation

¹ Or, *in our case*.

love, can have made no beginning of really knowing God, because the being of God, if correctly understood, as this has been revealed to us in Christ, is love. Here it is presupposed that the nature of God, if it has been truly learned by us, must make our being essentially like His. As John styles this transformation of our being into one that is similar to God's, a being begotten of God, this transformation can be wrought in us only through the knowledge of God that comes from the Spirit. The love of God, which so far had been entirely 9 unknown to us, and which constitutes His being, as a matter of fact and historically has been made known to us in the sending of His Son; but in our hearts it can again be made known only, if the Spirit enables us to understand this fact fully. But He teaches us, that He, whom God sent, was His only begotten Son, and hence the supreme object of His love; and that God by sending Him, has made us the greatest sacrifice of His love. But He made this sacrifice for the good of a world that is hostile to God, which certainly, least of all, deserved His love, in order to fulfil in the world the highest purpose of His love, and through the Son to lead them to life. In this 10 revelation of the love of God, we, however, not only learn to know His love, but the essence of love in general; for which reason it has been stated above, that all love comes from Him. For the essence of love is certainly not yet realized in our weak and faint love of God, as such love must to a certain degree have been realized in all the pious before the day of Christ but

for our sins. (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (12) No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: (13) hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

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- in the love of God as He showed this in the sending of His Son, and as He has manifested it most gloriously in giving Himself up to a death of atonement.
- 11 Our mutual love, also, to which the Apostle exhorted again and again, is as surely nothing else than the imitation of the divine love, to which we are in duty bound, and in which alone, accordingly, the essence of true love, and then, too, God's innermost being, is made known.
- 12 But now the Apostle openly declares that, as is well known, nobody has ever seen the Divine Being, and hence cannot see His essence, which is love. Notwithstanding this, he declares, that if we love one another, this is a guarantee for us, that He abides in us with His innermost being, and permanently determines us to the same love. Indeed, he even goes so far as to maintain, that He will also realize this His essence of love in us. How can we know this, since none have
- 13 seen His being, as this consists of love? For this reason he concludes, that only in mutual love we recognize our communion with God, according to which we are in Him and He in us. If His Spirit testifies to us, that God has revealed His greatest love, by realizing His character as love within us, then we know, that the fulfilment of the commandment of love is also worked in us by God Himself. But His Spirit cannot work in us unless God abides in us, because we abide in Him, and if we accordingly are found in the state of grace in the communion with God. In this way the Apostle, by

(14) And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent his son to be the Saviour of the world. (15) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth

returning to iii. 24, concludes his argument, that as a matter of fact our state of grace consists in the fulfilment of the double commandment of both faith and love ; since only the Spirit, through whom God lives and works in us, upholds for us the confession of the faith in opposition to all false doctrines, and teaches us to recognize the love of one another as the result of this divine love which is being realized in us.

The Apostle adopts still another way of bringing the proof for the same truth, that faith, as also love, are evidences of our state of grace, and this is the proof based upon the experience of the Christian. In doing this, he proceeds from the experience of the first believers, the eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus, among whom the Apostle includes himself, as he does in iv. 6. For these men have seen with their own eyes, and 14 can testify from their own experience, that the Father has sent the Son as the Saviour of the world. It was not necessary that the Spirit should reveal to these men that Jesus was the Son of God ; for they had again and again heard from His lips, that the Father had sent Him, and that the purpose of this sending was the salvation of the world. For this reason they can testify, that He who had loved the Son before the foundation of the world was laid (cf. John xvii. 24), and had in sending Him made the greatest sacrifice of His love to the world (cf. John iii. 16 17), according to His essence is love. But any one who, 15 in opposition to false doctrine, confesses Jesus as the Son coequal with God, in him, as has been seen, God abides, because only He can awaken this confession

in him, and he in God. (16) And we know and have believed the love which God hath¹ in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. (17) Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have bold-

¹ Or, in our case.

- through His Spirit, and this, again, presupposes his abiding in God and the constant concentration of his heart in the revelation of God in Christ. In this way the Apostle can include himself, as also his readers, since they have remained in this belief, with the eyewitnesses, since their knowledge also of the divine love had become perfect through the confident conviction which has yet been added, as Jesus had on one occasion said
- 16 of His disciples (cf. John xvii. 8). But here it is no longer the knowledge of a fact in faith, or of a truth that has been revealed in such a fact, but it is a matter of their own experience. For that the love of God is active in them also, they experience in the fact that it is He who is realizing His own special work of love in them, and in their loving. Now the Apostle can again exclaim, and can do so triumphantly, that God in His being is nothing else than love. Accordingly, he who continues in love continues in God, and God, whose essence is love, continues in him. There is no need of a further proof for this, than that through the fulfilment of the commandment of love, he is in the communion of God, and thereby in the state of grace.
- 17 But now the Apostle can proceed one step farther. If in this Godlike love this love has become perfect in the midst of the believing congregation of confessors, then God has worked this in them, in order that they may have the joy which is given by the certainty of salvation, not only for the present, but also on the day of judgment. For if they, although yet living in the world, stand in this communion of God, which Jesus at

ness in the day of judgment ; because as he is, even so are we in this world. (18) There is no fear in love : but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment : and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. (19) We love, because he first loved us. (20) If a man say, I love God, and

all times claimed for Himself (cf. to. iii. 24), and which naturally now more than ever joins Him in His heavenly life with God, then they are no longer the subjects of the judgment, which will fall upon the world because of its hostility to God. The purpose is to apply to their relation to God, which, if their character consists in love at all, naturally is, first of all, a love for God, what God states, that fear, which flees from another, is not the love, as love seeks the other ; and that the perfect love is not only free from 18 fear, but is entirely incompatible with it, and drives it out altogether, because fear is punished by this, that it destroys the relation of love and disturbs its enjoyment. If, then, this love has attained perfection, there cannot be any possible fear of the Judge. This by no means implies that they can appeal to their loving in the presence of the Judge as a merit or a service ; for it is undoubtedly the experience of all Christians, that loving, which characterizes them as such, has not 19 made its beginning in them, but is only an effect of the love which God has first shown to them. But this loving, which was before regarded chiefly as a love to God, is certainly always at the same time, too, a love to God as also a love to the brother. For that the claim of loving God, and at the same time hating the brother, is conscious falsehood, and hence a lie, is clear from the fact, that the brotherly love, the objects of which are daily before our eyes, is so much easier than the love of God, whom we have never seen, nor see now. Accordingly,

hateth his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, ¹cannot love God whom he hath not seen. (31) And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.

V Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God : and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him

¹ Many ancient authorities read *how can he love God whom he hath not seen.*

if the former is not present, neither can the latter possibly be there. But this inseparableness of the two is also
 21 based on the express command of God, who with equal urgency has insisted upon the love to the neighbor as upon the love to God (cf. Matt. xxii. 37 sqq.) ; so that the fulfilment of His commands, which is the guarantee of the certainty of our redemption (cf. iii. 23-24), is not present, if the one is not accompanied by the other.

Evidently the Apostle now intends to take up the second part of his argument, according to which, believing, as well as loving, is the proof of our being in the state of grace, and to draw this proof also from the experience
 1 of the believers themselves. Since, in doing this, he proceeds from the statement that everybody who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is begotten of God, it is to be remembered in this connection, that, as was the case iv. 15, he is not thinking of the beginning of faith, but of that faith which took a stand against that false doctrine which distinguished between the man Jesus and the heavenly Christ. This enduring faith, in which at all times all the functions of faith are fulfilled (cf. iii. 23), and in which the temptation to false doctrine are overcome, only God Himself can work in us, through that act which John calls being begotten of God. But this the Apostle bases on the fact, that as they know he has made all loving dependent on being begotten of God (cf. iv. 7), since a new proof results from this for the inseparableness of the love to God and the love to the brother, which has just been discussed. For it is a law

also that is begotten of him. (2) Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments. (3) For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. (4) For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world:

of nature, that everybody who loves him who has begotten him, will also love those who have been begotten by the same person; or, the son will love his brothers and sisters as he does his father. And from 2 this law of nature we learn, that as often as we really love God, we also love the children of God. But as this law of nature has received an express sanction by the commandment of God, John adds that it is carried out only then, if our love to God is demonstrated by the keeping of His commandments. But this must at 3 all times, and under all circumstances, be the case; for the love of God consists in the keeping of His commandments (cf. ii. 5), and in no other way than this can we prove our love. In the remark, that His commandments are not heavy, John refers only to those who love God, because for the natural man these commandments are not only heavy, but an impossible burden. But this only shows, that the natural man no more loves than keeps the commandments. It is necessary for this that a new life be first produced by God. For this reason John says, v. 1, that all loving of God, as also all loving of the brethren (and, indeed, all fulfilment of His laws), proceeds only from being begotten of God; and with this he has returned to his starting-point. For he had said also concerning perseverance in the faith over against the heresies, that it was only the result of being begotten of God. Now he can, then, summoning these together, say that everything that is begotten of God overcomes the world. The love that 4

and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. (5) And who is he that overcome the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (6) This is he

is begotten of God overcomes all the allurements to self-love that proceed from the world, as also the temptation to transgress any other commandments of God; and the faith which is begotten of God, overcomes all the temptations to heresy, which proceed from the false prophets of the world. In this power of overcoming the world is found the surest proof that our faith, like our loving, is the result of the working of God, which shows that we are in the communion with God, from which alone these things can come; and hence we are also in the state of grace.

But here the Apostle desires to speak specially of faith; and in this respect the power of overcoming the world has already been demonstrated in the fact, that the readers (and the Apostle with them) have excluded the heretics. Their common faith has actually won the victory over those heresies that spring from the world in its hostility to God. And what kind of a faith was that which proved that it had this power of

5 overcoming the world? It was the faith that came from being begotten of God, that Jesus is the Son co-equal with the Father. Now it becomes perfectly clear, that this object of faith is being emphasized in opposition to heretical teachings. For it is solemnly affirmed that this Jesus, of whom every believer is begotten, is the Son of God, and is none other than He, whose appearance is a matter of history; who

6 passed through the water and the blood, beginning with baptism in the Jordan and closing with a bloody death on the cross. The historical personage who is thereby characterized, is He whom the congregation

that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ ; not ² with the water only, but ¹ with the water and ² with the blood. (7) And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the

¹ Gr. *in*.

designates as the Mediator of its redemption, calling Him Jesus Christ. The false teachers, on the other hand, make a distinction between the man Jesus and the heavenly Christ, who they think did indeed in His baptism connect Himself with the former, but was separated from Him before His death upon the cross. This doctrine can yet concede, that Jesus Christ had indeed passed through the water, but not at all that He has passed through the blood, which He shed, since only the man Jesus, whom the heavenly Christ had already left, could die. But it is a matter of the greatest importance for the faith of the congregation that it was the eternal Mediator of redemption who died for us as man upon the cross, because through His atoning death the foundation was laid for our salvation ; for without the atonement for sin there is no communion with God, such as He intended to establish.

If this faith is to overcome the world, not only in particular cases, as when it overcomes the temptation to heresy, but also the unbelief of the world itself, by converting it, then it requires witnesses of what it maintains. But the Apostle enters upon this description of the true faith in the divine character of the historical Jesus, only because this leads him to the main point in his Christian evidences, namely, that we have in the experience of the believer himself the proof that he is in a state of grace. In the first place to testify of Him, as Jesus Himself has said (cf. John xv. 26) is the special office of the Spirit, because He, no less than Jesus Himself, (cf. John xiv. 16), is the Mediator of the truth, which has its source in immediate observation (cf. John xvi.

Spirit is the truth. (8) For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood : and the three agree in one. (9) If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater : for the witness of God is this, that he hath

- 13), and He can accordingly testify of Him. But according to an old rule of legal procedure, two or three witnesses are necessary for the establishment of a truth (cf. Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 5). At this place very late texts have been inserted from the Latin version, the words concerning the three witnesses in heaven (the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost), in contradistinction to which the three witnesses upon earth alone are mentioned in the older Greek texts. Luther had not originally included this passage in his translation, but these words were inserted later. They are entirely foreign to the connection,
- 8 in which, in addition to the Spirit as a witness, only water and blood are mentioned, and which are directed to the one object of testifying of the divine Sonship of Jesus. The Apostle has in mind the historical facts of the baptism and the death of Jesus; and as these could be proved only by the testimony of eyewitnesses, he, at the conclusion of this section, returns to its beginning, which had also proceeded from the testimony of the eyewitnesses (iv. 14). But in what way the baptism of Jesus testifies to His divine Sonship through the descending of the Holy Ghost, John shows in i. 32; and in how far His bloody death does this, is shown by the narrative of His being pierced by a lance in John xix. 34-37. The agreement
- 9 of these three witnesses guarantees the truth of the testimony of the Spirit. If then human testimony when confirmed by three witnesses is accepted, certainly the testimony of God must have all the greater certainty. Such a testimony on God's part, however, we have in these three witnesses, in which God Himself has given

borne witness concerning his Son. (10) He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him : he that believeth not God hath made him a liar ; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son. (11) And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (12) He that hath the Son hath the life : he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

testimony concerning His Son. In reference to the testimony of the Spirit, this is clear of itself, that in the Spirit God alone speaks and is operative (cf. iii. 24). But the testimony of the water also is based on a word of God, since He had declared to the Baptist, that He, upon whom he would see the Spirit descend, would be the Mediator of redemption (cf. John i, 33); and the testimony of the blood also is based on an Old Testament word of God (cf. John xix. 37), which testifies of Christ (cf. John v. 29).

True—and with this John comes to the main point— 10
 the believer, who obeys the fundamental law of iii. 23, does not stand in need of such testimony. He possesses the evidences of the divine Sonship of Jesus in his own heart. The unbeliever cannot receive this testimony only because he has not believed and does not believe the testimony of God in these three witnesses ; but thereby he makes God a liar, because only the testimony of a liar cannot be believed. Such a transgressor against God certainly cannot receive a testimony such as the be-
 liever has in his heart, as this consists in the fact that 11
 God has actually already given eternal life to the be-
 liever, in and with his faith, and has done so through
 His Son, since the believer sees God Himself in the Son
 and thereby enjoys in this life the full blessedness,
 which we expect to have in the life beyond. The
 Apostle again states, that he who in this way possesses 12
 the Son in faith as coequal with the Father, thereby has

(13) These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. (14) And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: (15) and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him. (16) If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, ¹ he shall ask, and

¹ Or, *he shall ask and shall give him life, even to them, &c.*

the life which the unbeliever can never receive. For with this the argument is completed, that the fulfilment of the demands of faith (iii. 23) brings with it the highest proof of the state of grace in the actual possession of salvation, with which assuredly for time and eternity, life and death, salvation and destruction have been definitely decided.

- 13 In concluding his letter the Apostle expressly states, that the purpose of his writing had been to bring home to the consciousness of the readers the fact that they, in the faith in what the name of the Son of God implies, already have eternal life. But with this the question has evidently been answered, with which the main discussion began (iii. 21), and upon which our joy in our communion with God as also the certainty of our redemption depends. In the end it is faith which must, under all circumstances, at all times be admonished to exercise love, whereas faith, if it is really present, directly brings with it the possession of redemption.
- 14 and thereby also joy. But this joy, as in iii. 22, is proved in the hearing of our prayers, in which connection naturally the prayer must be in accordance with
- 15 the will of God, and hence must be spoken in the joyful confidence that it will be heard. Indeed, this confidence is so great that we, as soon as we pray, are conscious of the fact, that we at once possess that for which
- 16 we pray. Even if a person sees his brother commit a

God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a ¹sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request. (17) All unrighteousness is sin: and there is ¹a sin not unto death.

(18) We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth ²himself, and

¹ Or, *sin*.

² Some ancient authorities read *him*.

sin, and thus losing his state of grace, he is able through his prayer to secure this state for him again, since God, in answer to his prayer, works a knowledge of his sin and a longing for forgiveness in the brother. This confidence has only *one* exception, namely of the brother who has sinned unto death. For there is a sin, which absolutely leads to death, and this is the sin of falling away, i. e. the conscious and intentional departure from the faith and from the new moral life that is connected with this faith. The Apostle does not ask them to pray for such a man, because God, who will not compel a person to accept salvation against his will, will not hear such a prayer. But as everything which departs from the right- 17
eousness that is pleasing to God, is sin, there certainly will be enough of cases left in which we can feel that our prayers for the erring brother have been answered. It is, however, true that this case never happens or is found in him who has been begotten of God. But the 18
working of God, which results in what we call being begotten of God, is not something that determines our life once for all. He who has experienced this, must always protect himself against hostile forces, which would frustrate and in the end destroy this influence. He who has been begotten of God knows that the Devil, from whom, as is well known, all dangerous influences proceed, is powerless in his case, as long as he really desires to be protected against these. In him appears and is active a power of God which these influences cannot even touch, much less overcome. He who has been begotten

the evil one toucheth him not. (19) We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one. (20) And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in

of God is and remains in every activity of his life under
19 the guidance of God, and only the unbelieving world is
entirely under the control of the Devil. The Apostle in
conclusion asks the question, how we can know this, not-
20 withstanding the constant sins in Christianity, which
seems to be in contradiction to this claim. But in reply
he refers to the fundamental fact of redemption, the fact,
namely, that the Son of God is present with us, to whom
the power has been given to recognize Him, who alone,
according to His being, is really God (cf. John. xvii. 3),
and with the knowledge of whom complete salvation has
been given to us. But this Son of God is not only present
in us. We the believers, are also present in Him, who
also according to His being is what He must be, namely,
the divine Son coequal with the Father, not an image
of our imagination merely, but the historical Jesus, whom
we call the Mediator of our redemption, because we at
all times draw from Him whatever we need for our sal-
vation. True it is He who, because we see in Him the
essence of the true God, transmits to us the blessed vision
of God, which even on earth constitutes eternal life.
But the fact remains, that unless we retain what we
have, such life does not abide in us. The letter, closes
not with the usual benediction, but with an earnest ad-
monition. The times were perilous. It was manifest,
that in the midst of Christianity, images of the fancy had
been set up in the place of the true God, whom we see
in Christ. There were those false prophets, who in the
place of the incarnate Son of God set up their fantas-
tic representation of a Christ, who was not the histori-

him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. (21) *My* little children, guard yourselves from idols.

cal Jesus. Again others were to be found, who thought 21 that the new life, to which faith was intended to lead, consisted in the denial of all obedience to the divine ordinances. There were those also, who in the consciousness of a righteousness received from grace, believed that they had no sin and needed not to furnish any evidences of their righteousness in their lives. All these things the Apostle includes in his exhortation: Be on your guard against the idols.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

JOHN

I The elder unto the elect ¹ lady and her children, whom I love in truth ; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth ; (2) for the truth'ssake which abideth in us, and it shall be with us for ever : (3) Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

¹ Or, *Cyria*.

- 1** In this letter, too, John does not mention his name, but only describes himself as the last representative of an older generation, around whom an entirely new generation had already grown up. By the mistress of the house, who here, as in 1 Pet. v. 13, is called the **Elect lady**, is evidently meant a congregation, which is only distinguished as a whole from her children, i. e. from the individual members, because something may be said of the former which does not apply to the latter. That the Apostle in truth loves her, appears first of all from the fact, that this love is not the expression of an individual feeling, but is shared in by all, who have permanently come into the possession of the faith ; as also from the fact, that this love is not intended for them as individuals, but as those in whom truth permanently abides and among whom it has secured a hold it cannot lose, as is the case with those whom they love. For this reason too the usual salutation here becomes a promise, which is intended for the readers as well as for those
- 2** whom they love. For together with the common possession of truth, the grace that gives to others, namely charity, which sympathizes with all their needs, must
- 3**

II JOHN

[I, 4-5]

(4) I rejoice greatly that I have found *certain* of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father. (5) And now I beseech thee, ¹ lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

¹ Or, *Cyria*.

have been given them, as also that peace, which Jesus at His departure promised to His own. The implication that their blessings come not only from God but also from Christ, is at this place expressly based on the fact, that He is the Son of the Father, without whom the latter does nothing and with whom He does all things. But that the readers will be among these appears from their possession of the truth as well as of love, because, wherever there is truth and love, there is no lack of the conditions with which the divine blessings of a Christian congregation are connected.

It had given the Apostle great joy, to learn from reports which he had received, that among the members of the congregation to whom he was writing there were those whose walk he could praise. He intentionally does not say how many there were of these; but the expression suffices to show, that he does not mean all of them. For this very reason he now appeals with his request to the entire congregation. He does not directly state what he is asking for, because the connection shows, that they should all cause him the same joy by a walk in harmony with the commandment of God, who through Christ has become our Father, as do those members of whom he has heard. With such a request which naturally demands compliance, he does not write to them a new command, but that, which they together, with him have known from the beginning of their Christian life, namely, the commandment of love: for love implies that we each one fulfil the prayer of the

(6) And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it. (7) For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. (8) Look to yourselves, that ye ¹lose not the things which ²we have wrought, but that ye receive a full re-

¹ Or, *destroy*.

² Many ancient authorities read *ye*.

- 6 other. But this demands also love to the Father, from whom we have received the commandment in harmony with which is the life of those members of the congregation whom he has praised. For the love to Him consists in this, that we walk according to His commandments; and this commandment, with which the conduct of these people who have caused him joy harmonizes, is certainly none other than that they should on this account, walk in accordance with the message of redemption which had been preached to them from the
- 7 beginning. For this is demanded in the present times in which have publicly arisen so many deceivers, who show themselves to be such by the fact that they no longer accept the Church's fundamental doctrine concerning the incarnation of Jesus Christ, (cf. 1 John iv. 2). Among these many deceivers has also appeared that one who is such absolutely, namely, the Antichrist.
- 8 The readers are to be on their guard, lest being induced by such deceivers to discard the truth of redemption that they had received, they tear down what he and his associates had by their labors built up in the congregation. The wages for this work naturally the workmen do not receive, but it is received by those among whom they have labored, as the Lord Himself says (cf. John iv. 86). Full and complete are these wages, if only the hearers preserve the blessings which they have so far secured by the labors of the Apostles, and attain the end of their redemption.

II JOHN

[I, 9-11

ward. (9) Whosoever 'goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. (10) If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: (11) for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.

^a Or, *take the lead.* Comp. 3 Jn. 9.

It is true that these deceivers pretend to have progressed beyond that which they had hitherto possessed. But if this progress consists in not adhering to the doctrine concerning Christ, which the readers have received, then they lose nothing less than God Himself, whom they cannot have since He, in accordance with this teaching, has manifested Himself in Christ. Only he who continues in this teaching, has the Father, who has revealed Himself as such in Christ; and has also the Son. Nothing but the true doctrine concerning Christ teaches us to know Him as such. These heretical teachings also, concerning the heavenly Christ, of whom the first letter has spoken, had already been spread by their representatives, who went from place to place in order to do this. But when such an one comes and brings a doctrine concerning Christ other than that which they have received, they are to refuse him hospitality, and even if he is compelled to leave the house at the entrance to which he has asked for hospitality, they are to refuse him a fraternal farewell. If they do not do this and by their actions recognize him as a Christian brother, then they have communion with his evil deeds, which consist in this very thing, that he, under the semblance of teaching Christ deceives others. For the readers too would thereby also deceive others into regarding him as a Christian brother. We see from this that at the time when this letter was written, the heretics had not yet been officially excluded from the

(12) Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write them* with paper and ink: but I hope to come unto you, and to speak face to face, that your joy may be made full.

(18) The children of thine elect sister salute thee.

congregation, as is the case in the first letter, especially as evidently in the congregation itself, to which he writes, many still believed in them. For this reason the danger was very great, and the absolute separation from them was imperatively necessary. The demand that sounds so harsh was perfectly justified on the basis of the words of the Lord in Matt. xviii. 17.

- 12 The Apostle would still have much to communicate to them, if he had been minded to do this in writing; but he had decided rather to come to them in person and speak to them himself. Accordingly he hopes for the joy of bringing them a blessing and to add to the joy of seeing them again, and in this way making his joy complete. This joy they doubtlessly will share with
- 18 him. The fact that he sends greetings from the children of her sister, whom he, as he does in the case of the Mistress herself, (cf. v. 1) calls the Elect, shows conclusively that the Apostle is speaking of the members of the congregation, in the midst of whom he is living and who send greetings to the congregation to which he is writing.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

JOHN

I The elder unto Gaius, the beloved, whom I love in truth.

(2) Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. (3) For I ¹rejoiced greatly, when brethren came in and bare witness unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth. (4) Greater joy have I none than ²this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

(5) Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal;

¹ Or, rejoice greatly, when brethren come and bear witness.

² Or, these things that I may hear.

John, who describes himself as he does in his second 1 Epistle, writes to a private man, whom he repeatedly 2 assures of his sincere love, and expresses the wish, that he may prosper bodily as well as spiritually. It seems that evil reports concerning Gaius had been brought to the Apostle. For this reason he emphasizes the great joy which he had, when brethren came from the con- 3 gregation and brought him truthful reports concerning the real life of his friend. What this report stated, can indirectly be seen from what the Apostle says, that he knows no greater joy than to be assured, that his 4 spiritual children, to whom Gaius accordingly belongs, walk in the truth, i. e. cling to the true faith and prove this faith in their life. The immediate purpose of his writing is to recommend some traveling missionaries, who carry this letter with them. Whatever Gaius shall 5 have done to them, and which is all the more meritorious, because it is done to those who do not belong to his congregation, is only in harmony with what his former conduct justified the Apostle in expecting. For

(6) who bare witness to thy love before the church : whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God : (7) because that for the sake of the Name they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. (8) We therefore ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers¹ for the truth.

(9) I wrote somewhat unto the church : but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence, among them, receiveth

¹ Or. *with*.

the missionaries had already on a previous occasion been at his place, and in the congregation in the place where the Apostle is living they had publicly testified of the
 6 love which Gaius had shown them. He accordingly will be doing well, to equip them for their further journey and, according to custom, accompany them a distance on their way, which naturally presupposes that previous to this he has shown them all hospitality. Only this is worthy of God, whom He is welcoming in His messen-
 7 gers (cf. John xiii. 20) and His name is glorified by their preaching. To this may be added, that they, in accordance with the command of Jesus in Matt. x. 8 sqq., must not accept anything from the Gentiles among whom they are laboring and in whose habits of life they must under no circumstances participate, and hence are as worthy as they are needy of support. For this reason we, as the elder says, including himself with them, are in duty bound to receive such brethren in hospitality, since only in this way we can become their fellow-laborers in the service of the truth.

The second part of the letter furnishes a discouraging picture of the dissensions in the congregation of
 9 Gaius. The Apostle had written a letter to them. Evidently he has in mind our second Epistle. But he has not been able to send it officially to the congregation, i. e. to their church council. For in this body a certain Diotrephes is conspiring to secure for himself

us not. (10) Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth and

supreme authority in the congregation, and he is a pronounced opponent of the Apostle. He will have nothing to do with the Apostle or with anything that he sends, such as messengers or letters; and, accordingly, if a letter had come addressed to the church council he would have succeeded in having it withheld from the congregation. Since that Epistle, as we know, contained only an exhortation to adhere to the right doctrine, it is highly probable, that Diotrephes favored false doctrine, or may even have been one of the false prophets. The Apostle now states that in the visit which, according to 2 John 12, he contemplates making, he will expose to the congregation the dealings of this Diotrephes in the past. He 10 will remind them how this man had with slanderous tongue blackened the reputation of the Apostle and all who adhered to him, by means of empty talk and all kinds of fallacious reasoning. But he is not content with this. In what he further says, he doubtless refers to the first visit of the missionaries mentioned above. Diotrephes had not only on his part failed to receive the brethren, but had also prevented the congregation from doing so. The congregation was ready to do so, but by threatening to excommunicate from the congregation everybody who was willing to do this, he defeated their wishes. This had probably been the fate of Gaius, of whom we have heard that he had received these men kindly; and for this reason he recommends the missionaries now not to the congregation, but only to this private man. In this way ambi-

casteth *them* out of the church. (11) Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God. (12) Demetrius hath the witness of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, we also bear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.

tion, hostility to the Apostle and want of charity are the evil deeds which had in the past appeared in the
11 career of Diotrophes. The Apostle accordingly can only admonish Gaius not to imitate such wicked conduct. But as he had probably not expected this of Gaius, he puts his admonition in an altogether general form, and sets up the evil against the good, in order to show what the real basis of each is, and this no longer gives the believer any choice in the matter. For here, too, it is true, that we can only see by the actual choice made, if a person has experienced being begotten of God, and accordingly is in all his doings under the guidance of God, or not. He, in whom the opposite shows itself, has not even made the beginning of Christianity, which consists in the seeing of God in Christ.

This general admonition marks the transition from the condemnation of Diotrophes to the recommendation
12 of a certain Demetrius. The latter receives an excellent testimonial from all who come to the Apostle from the congregation of Gaius; indeed, the truth itself, to which he adheres, and which finds its expression throughout his conduct, testifies for him; and if the Apostle and his adherents confirm their testimony, Gaius certainly knows that their testimony is reliable. This emphatic recommendation presupposes that Demetrius had been to a certain extent an object of suspicion to Gaius. Evidently the former still adhered to the majority of the congregation which was yet under

III JOHN

[I, 13-14

(13) I had many things to write unto thee, but I am unwilling to write *them* to thee with ink and pen: (14) but I hope shortly to see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be unto thee. The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name.

the control of Diotrephes, without belonging to them inwardly. But for this very reason the Apostle has sent the congregational letter through the missionaries to him, who would, sooner than the excommunicated Gaius, manage to put it into the hands of the congregation. For this reason Gaius is to be moved by this recommendation to trust Demetrius, and already on account of the letter, to enter into closer relations with him. At the close of the letter, as at the close of his 13 congregational letters, the Apostle refers to his approaching visit, on which occasion he will orally communicate all details to Gaius. Then follows the wish of peace, and the greetings from old friends of Gaius. But as the Apostle expressly directs him to greet his friends by name, it follows from this, that he can only count some few in the congregation as such, but all the warmer on this account are the greetings which he sends them.

THE EPISTLE OF

JUDE

I ¹ Jude, a ² servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of ³ James,
⁴ to them that are called, beloved in God the Father,
and kept for Jesus Christ: (2) Mercy unto you and peace
and love be multiplied.

¹ Gr. *Judas*.

² Gr. *bondservant*.

³ Or, *Jacob*.

⁴ Or, *to them that are beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, being called*.

- 1 The author in the address of this letter merely describes himself as a man who is standing in the presence of Christ, and whose admonitions the readers are accordingly to heed. But in order that they may know which Jude it is, he calls himself the brother of the well-known James, who was so highly honored among the Gentile and the Jewish Christians as the head of the congregation in Jerusalem. He was accordingly, as this James was also, one of the brothers of Jesus, i. e. of the sons of Mary and Joseph, born later than Jesus. He does not, as the New Testament letters generally do, address himself to a particular congregation or group of congregations, but only to those who have remained faithful in one of these, for which reason, too, the place where they live is not mentioned. These belong, as all Christians do, to the called, who, because God through Christ has become our Father, know that they are beloved of God, and in consequence of this love are reserved for Christ as His property, to whom they were originally consecrated in baptism, because God has strengthened them in their faithfulness toward Him, although others have become
- 2 unfaithful. For this reason the blessing, with which

(3) Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. (4) For there are certain men crept in privily, *even* they who were of old ¹ written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying ² our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

¹ Or, *set forth*.

² Or, *the only Master, and our Lord Jesus Christ*.

the Epistle opens, starts with the mercy of God, which has called them unto redemption in Christ, and in Him has given them his love. He can only wish, then, that all this be increased in them.

The author begins by explaining the occasion of his letter. It is, indeed, true that he personally did not lack the zealous desire to write to them; but then ³ he would rather have spoken to them concerning the deliverance which he, the believer out of Israel, has secured in common with them, the Gentile Christians, and which in the end, on the day of judgment, is to be given to them as the goal of their Christian hope. Then a circumstance occurred which forced him, rather to write to them an earnest word of admonition, urging forcibly upon them to fight for the precious possession of the confidence in this consummation of redemption, which had been entrusted to them when in baptism they had been consecrated to God as His possession, but which cannot be entrusted to them a second time if they do not faithfully preserve the holiness which had been given them, and in this way permit it to be lost. The reason, however, which has made such ⁴ an admonition necessary is this, that several persons have appeared in the congregation who really did not belong to it, and could only have come into it surreptitiously, because they are by no means holy persons, but such as have in times past been described in the Old

(5) Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, that ¹the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, ²afterward destroyed them

¹ Many very ancient authorities read *Jesus*.

² Gr. *the second time*.

Testament Scriptures as men who are under the judgment of iniquity. They, indeed, pretend to be Christians, but they regard the grace of God, who has in Christ entered into a special relationship of love to us, as a permit for licentiousness, because His grace would under all circumstances grant them forgiveness for everything, a claim which Paul had already foreseen as coming (cf. Rom. vi. 15). But thereby, as a matter of fact, they deny, that they have a Superior over them, who certainly is for them, as Christians, the only Master, and they act as though Jesus Christ were not our Lord
 5 who had been exalted to God. As Jude merely intends to admonish his readers in their contest with these impious men, who through their deception would make them lose their certainty for their final redemption, to defend this possession that had been entrusted to them, he certainly knows full well, that already on a previous occasion, when this had been entrusted to them, they had learned to know upon what presupposition this assurance rests, and by what way only it can be preserved. Nevertheless, he wants to remind them once again of all this.

For, as they know, the people of Israel, whom God delivered out of Egypt, know everything that the grace of their God had done to them and had thereby guaranteed to them. But when they, notwithstanding this, lost their confidence in Him, then, when for the second time the question was to be decided, whether He would deliver them and take them into the Promised Land or not, He gave them up to destruction in the wilderness. If this could happen to a whole nation, as it did to the

that believed not. (6) And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. (7) Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth ¹ as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

¹ Or, as an example of eternal fire, suffering punishment.

chosen people of God, how much more to them, if they, through the abuse of this grace and the actual denial of the sovereignty of the Mediator of their redemption, permit the assurance of attaining their redemption that is in store for them to be lost. But even such highly 6 favored creatures as those angels were, of whom Gen. vi. 2 speaks, have not preserved the high position of dignity that was given to them, when they descended upon the earth and mingled with the daughters of men. An old Jewish book (the so-called Book of Enoch), which at that time was highly revered but afterwards was not received into the canon, describes how these angels are bound with chains that cannot be broken and covered with the deepest darkness, and are preserved for the judgment of a great day, such as the final judgment will be. But they can no longer escape from this habitation of theirs, and for this reason there is no escape for them from the eternal destruction; nor is there such for those who have deserted the dignity of saints which has been given them and have again sunk into godlessness. But we need not to search for hidden information, which reports concerning the punishment of those angels. For in the case of the cities in the Siddim valley, 7 which made themselves guilty of the same terrible sins of prostitution when the Sodomites lusted after the flesh of the angels who in human form had entered the house of Lot (cf. Gen. xix. 5), which was for them just as much strange flesh as was that of the daughters of men, after

(8) Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at ¹dignities. (9) But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

¹ Gr. *glories*.

whom those angels lusted, their punishment and its lesson are apparent to all. For as the Dead Sea now covers these cities, it was thought in the volcanic phenomena on this ground, the eternal fire could yet be perceived, of which these cities, at their destruction by the rain of fire and brimstone, had become the victims.

Now follows a description of those godless men, who, notwithstanding this warning example make themselves guilty of the same sins which those Sodomites committed, because being tricked by the dreamy visions of their sensual lusts, they lack all power of clear consciousness. They think that it is only flesh which they are thereby polluting, and that this could not harm them, because, they are high spiritual beings (cf. on. v. 19). But they despise all government because they, as spiritual beings think themselves able to give rules and directions for their own activity. When they are warned against the powers of hell, to whom they become subject by such conduct, they abuse these majesties, as the author calls them on account of their superhuman power and strength. And yet even such an exalted creature as the archangel Michael has not ventured to do such a thing. Concerning him an old Jewish book which at that time was highly revered, narrates, that when he was contending in words with the Devil for the legal right of possessing the body of Moses, he did not dare to pass any judgment upon him, which might appear as blasphemy, but left the judgment in the hands of God. But they blaspheme that which they do not know, as little as they

(10) But these rail at whatsoever things they know not : and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they ¹destroyed. (11) Woe unto them ! for they went in the way of Cain, and ²ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. (12) These are they who are ³hidden rocks in your

¹ Or, *corrupted*. Comp. 2 Pet. 2. 12 marg. ² Or, *cast themselves away*.
³ Or, *spots*.

know anything that is supermundane and supersensual. 10 They understand only those things which can be perceived by the senses, and which they, after the manners of the brute creation, know instinctively how to appreciate as means of sustenance. But what kind of a knowledge this is, is clear from the fact, that by the unbridled use of these things, they destroy themselves for time and for eternity. In the form of a threatened punishment for them Jude describes them and their sinful doings by three old Testament typical cases. As 11 Cain, the first example of the sin which has broken forth out of the God-created human race, forms a contrast to Abel, thus they have followed his example, instead of going upon the ways of the saints, such as the new creation produces. As Balaam, at the prospect of sensual enjoyment, which sin held out to him, permitted himself to be led upon the same evil path, they, for the same reason, have rushed without restraint upon the same deceptive way. As the company of Korah through their rebellion against the divine order, was destroyed, thus they are to meet with the same destruction.

They are those who are desecrating the love feasts of 12 the congregation, by unhesitatingly degrading these into common carousals, and using them only for the satisfaction of their pleasures and thereby depriving them of their character as feasts of love, the beginnings of which we saw in 1 Cor. xi. 21. In four grand pictures Jude describes their character from different points of

love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves ; clouds without water, carried along by winds ; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots ; (18) wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own ¹shame ; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever. (14) And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ²ten thousands of his holy ones, (15) to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought,

¹ Gr. *shames*.² Gr. *his holy myriads*.

view. Waterless clouds, which are driven about by every wind and do not bring the rain that is so earnestly desired, and which these clouds promised, are images of these seeming Christians. The complete death of their spiritual life is described in a fourfold ascending scale, in the picture of trees, which the autumn winds deprived of their leaves, and which now stand there bare ; of those which do not at all bring forth any fruit on account of their natural unfruitfulness ; of those which already for the second time have died away ; and of those which have been entirely rooted out and accordingly can no longer prosper. The image picture of the
13 waves of the ocean, which cast up only dirt and slime, is directly changed into the expression of their shamelessness, which foams out their own disgraceful deeds ; and the picture of the wandering stars (comets) refers to the perverseness of their unstable passionate character. The former is destined to be extinguished in deepest darkness, just as utter destruction is in waiting for
14 their antitypes. In the old book, of which mention is
15 made in v. 6, a descendant of Adam in the seventh degree, Enoch, and hence surely a very old prophet, predicts concerning such godless persons when he sees God approaching with the myriads of His angels, in order to punish their godless deeds and words. This finally brings the author again to that which is charac-

and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (16) These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

(17) But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; (18) how that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after ¹their own ungodly lusts. (19) These are they who make separations, ²sensual, having not the Spirit. (20) But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your

¹ Gr. *their own lusts of ungodliness.*

² Or, *natural.* Or, *animal.*

teristic in the speaking of these people. They constantly murmur against God, because they are dissatisfied with 16 their fate, which they, however, have, by walking according to their lusts, brought down upon themselves. They speak boastful words, although, if it is conducive to their advantage, they also know how to look with amazement on the external condition of a man, i. e. to humble themselves before him by flattery.

The admonition proper addressed to the readers begins 17 by recalling the predictions which had been repeatedly 18 made orally by the Apostle, who had declared that at the last times there would be mockers, as these are who are now walking in their godless lusts. For this reason already the readers are not at all to be unduly impressed by their claims. Their mocking, however, consists in 19 this, that they make a difference between themselves as spiritual Christians and the others, whom they in derision call psychical persons, i. e. men who, without possessing higher enlightenment, know only what man can grasp with his natural psychical life. This is clear from the manner, in which by way of contrast Jude designated them as sensual persons, who yet walk in their natural and sinful mind, because they do not possess the Spirit, who has been given us in Christ. On the other hand, 20 he admonishes the readers, that they should not be the

most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, (21) keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (22) ¹ And on some have

¹ The Gr. text in this passage (*And . . . fre*) is somewhat uncertain. Some ancient authorities read *And some refute while they dispute with you.* Comp. 1 Tim. 5. 20; Tit. 1. 9.

- least disturbed by these mockers, in regard to their most holy faith, which the others deride as the vulgar Christian faith in contrast to their own higher spiritual knowledge, that permits them to live as they please. This, of course, they can only do, but they too only, because they possess the Holy Spirit, who teaches them how to pray for this and how to be heard. Only if they in this way grow in their faith which makes them
- 21 certain of the love of God, they can also do the one thing, which is necessary for the attainment of eternal life, namely to persevere in the love of God by not permitting themselves to be misled to sin, because sin alone can deprive them of the love of God. But since, as a matter of course, even if they strive most earnestly, they will constantly err, they cannot be certain of this preservation in the love of God and therefore of their state of grace, unless with full assurance they wait for the return of the Lord Christ, who will then judge, but who, with the same mercy, which has given them their redemption, will also cover over all their wrong-doings and weaknesses, as long as they show themselves to be true disciples in their faith and in their striving. Then
- 22 follows the direction how the readers are to deport themselves in contrast to those who are in danger of being misled by those godless men. That the deepest pity is to be shown them, is a matter of course with those, who themselves hope for the mercy of Christ. But there is an essential difference in the manner in which this pity must show itself in the case of the various classes of such men. There are those who yet

mercy, ¹who are in doubt; (23) and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

(24) Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, (25) to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and ²for evermore. Amen.

¹ Or, *while they dispute with you.*

² Gr. *unto all the ages.*

doubt, and accordingly have not yet definitely decided to join the ranks of those mockers. In this case, they are to be snatched as a brand from the fire, in order to 23 deliver them from their deceivers and to save them. In contradistinction to others, the fear of being deceived forbids all contact with them, such as would be the case if an attempt was made to save them. As he, who hates every pollution that proceeds from the flesh, will regard as disgusting also the undergarment, because it is worn next to the body and is thereby polluted by the flesh, thus he who is anxious scrupulously to preserve himself will also regard as something hateful even the most superficial touch of him who is living in such sin. We can and must pity such persons deeply; but we must break off all associations with them in order to preserve ourselves. The author closes with a doxology of God, 24 who alone is able to preserve us against being misled in any way, and who can prevent us from stumbling and in this way can bring it about, that finally, in exultant joy, because we need not fear His judgment, we can stand without a spot before the face of His glory. For He, through our Lord Jesus Christ, has become our Deliverer, having sent Him and having accomplished the 25 work of redemption through Him, for which reason He is to be glorified, as He was glorified before the entire world age, now and in all coming world times. This Jude seals with his Amen.

THE REVELATION

OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

I The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God ¹gave him to show unto his ²servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass : and he sent and signified ³it by his angel unto his servant John : (2) who bare witness of the

¹ Or, gave unto him, to show unto his servants. the things, &c.

² Gr. bondservants.

³ Or, them.

The superscription of this book describes it as an Apocalypse, i. e. a revelation of the divine counsels concerning the future. Such a revelation can, naturally, proceed only from God Himself. But, as in the case of everything pertaining to the carrying out of the work of redemption, He has entrusted its manifestation to Jesus Christ, in order that the latter may show to the servants of God in the narrower sense of the term, i. e. to the prophets, what must take place in the near future according to His counsel. The Apocalypse, accordingly, does not propose to give secret information concerning the events in the history of the world or of the Church, as these follow upon each other in thousands of years to come, but concerning the consummation of the divine plan of redemption, as this, in the entire New Testament, is expected to be near at hand. Christ has, through His angels, sent to His servant John, who had dedicated his entire life to His service, such instruction as, according to what follows, directed him to go to Patmos for the purpose of receiving the revelation, in order to describe to him in a series of pictures this divine counsel in reference to the impending consummation of salvation, as this is to pass before his eyes in visions. It

REVELATION

[I, 3-4

word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw. (8) Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein : for the time is at hand.

(4) John to the seven churches that are in Asia : Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and ¹ who is

¹ Or, *who cometh*.

is expressly stated by John that this book contains such visions. But the most important thing in these visions is not what is seen, but the word of God therein imparted to the prophet, and the divine revelation of redemption thereby made. These visions, which Christ causes His servant to see, are only the form in which Christ gives testimony of the divine counsels of redemption concerning the last times, as these have become unfolded to Him in His exaltation with God, since they could not be unfolded to Him while He yet walked the earth. But John can do nothing more than testify in what form the divine revelation concerning the future of redemption has been given to him. The book is intended for public reading in the meetings of the congregations. John describes its contents as proph- 3
ecy. But by this term the Scriptures nowhere means merely prediction in the narrow sense, but also the admonition that is connected with the promise. For this reason those are pronounced blessed who read these words in public and hear them, but only in case this is followed by the keeping of them, i. e. by obedience to that which is written in these words. For the time is near at hand when that which is predicted is to be fulfilled, and thereby it will be decided who is to take part in the promised consummation of redemption.

This book, however, while addressed to all Christen- 4
dom, is, primarily, like all New Testament writings, intended for a narrower group of congregations, to

to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; (5) and from Jesus Christ, *who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and* ¹loosed us from our sins ²by his

¹ Many authorities, some ancient, read *washed*. Heb. 9. 14; comp. ch. 7. 14

² Gr. *in*.

which it is accordingly sent in the form of a letter. Those thus addressed are seven congregations in Western Asia Minor, the names of which are to be made known later. But the fact that they are seven in number intimates that in them the entire circle of congregations to which they belong, and, indeed, the whole of Christendom, is to be represented. The letter begins with the salutation with which the Pauline Epistles generally begin. But the grace, as also the redemption which comes from this grace, is here described in a solemn manner, as coming from God, who is called by the Old Testament name, *Ihwh* (cf. Ex. iii. 14), which word we are accustomed to pronounce *Jehovah*. But this name is here described as meaning, that He is the One who exists from eternity to eternity, He who was and He who is coming in order to bring about the consummation of redemption in His Messiah. For He was already engaged in this in the time of the Old Testament, when He transmitted His grace to the people of Israel through the Spirit who was bestowed upon His prophets. The manifold character of this Spirit, as operative in the different prophets, is again depicted in the form of seven spirits, seven being a sacred number. They stand before the throne in order to be sent by Him to the prophets and to give them His revelation. The last one, however, through whom He has trans-

5 mitted His grace to men, is Jesus Christ. He is the faithful, and for this reason the trustworthy witness for everything that He has made known to us of His divine redemptive counsels. He is the first-born of

REVELATION

[I, 6-8

blood; (6) and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto¹ his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion² for ever and ever. Amen. (7) Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

(8) I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God,³ who is and who was and⁴ who is to come, the Almighty.

¹ Or, God and his Father. ² Gr. unto the ages of the ages. Many ancient authorities omit of the ages. ³ Or, he who.

the dead, because in His resurrection He has not only been born again to a new life, but has also given us the surety of a similar resurrection. But through His exaltation He has been raised to be the Ruler of the world, who, notwithstanding the opposition of all the kings of the earth, will effect the consummation of the divine redemptive counsels. He will do this because He has proved His abiding love for us by delivering us, through His atoning blood, from the slavery of sin, and has already realized in us the kingdom of God, in 6 which we as priests serve God, who is at the same time His Father. For this He, to whom glory and power belong to all eternity, is glorified, and this glorification is sealed with the Amen of the Apostle. Of 7 Him is true that which, as it were, forms the motto of the entire prophecy of the book, namely, that He comes as He has promised (Mark xiv. 62), surrounded by the clouds of heaven. He is to be visible to all eyes, especially, as already prophesied in Zech. xii. 10, to those who slew Him, and because, when the judgment approaches, all the generations of the world will lament on account of this coming. The prophet seals this with his Amen, which he introduces with the Greek equivalent. God is the guarantee for this, who 8 speaks through His prophets, and Him he here calls by the Old Testament name of Jehovah Elohim, which he

(9) I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and ¹ patience *which are* in Jesus was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. (10) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet (11) saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. (12) And I turned to see

¹ Or, *steadfastness*.

interprets as he did in i. 4. He can be this, because He is the beginning and the end, as is here expressed by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and also the Almighty, who can victoriously bring to a conclusion what He decided upon in the beginning.

- 9 John begins the first of his visions, the vision of his calling, by introducing himself to his readers as their brother, who accordingly shares the tribulations by which the readers at that time were afflicted; but he shares also the membership in the already present kingdom of God (cf. i. 6), which teaches us to bear all sufferings with the same patience which he had formerly witnessed in Jesus. For he was sojourning in the island of Patmos, and for the special purpose of hearing the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, which, according
- 10 to i. 2, he was to reveal to others. But it happened on the day which was sacred to the Lord, the day on which He had risen from the tomb, which we call the Lord's day. He was in the Spirit, i. e. had been removed from the limitations of his earthly and human life, and only heard and saw what the Spirit gave to him to see and
- 11 to hear. Then he heard a voice, which solemnly, like the sound of a trumpet, announced the beginning of the visions, and commanded him to write down what he saw and to send the book to the seven congregations, which
- 12 are now mentioned by name. When he turned to see

REVELATION

[I, 13-16]

the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden 'candlesticks; (13) and in the midst of the 'candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. (14) And his head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; (15) and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. (16) And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his

¹ Gr. *lampstands*.

whose voice it was, he saw first seven golden candle- 13 sticks and in their midst a form like to a Son of man, in a garment that reached down to His feet, and which, as was the case with the High Priest, was girded up to the breast with a girdle not decorated with gold, but consisting entirely of gold. It was the heavenly High Priest, who formerly walked upon earth as the Son of man and now rules in God's Holy of Holies, into which He entered at His ascension to attain divine glory. To this glory everything which the Seer beholds points. The hair of His head, like snow-white wool, recalls the An- 14 cient of Days (Dan. vii. 9); He is the oldest of the Elders, for He is eternal as is God Himself. The fiery glance of His eye is the symbol of divine omniscience. It penetrates the depth of the soul with its radiance. His feet are like flaming brass, as a symbol of His om- 15 nipotence, which treads down and destroys everything that stands in His way; His voice is more powerful than all other sounds, like the mighty waves. It is a sign that in the presence of His word of command all opposition must be silenced. The seven stars in His right 16 hand show that His protection secures even the highest creature against all its enemies; and the double-edged sword, proceeding from his mouth, indicates that His judgment strikes His enemies with unerring keenness.

countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. (17) And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, (18) and the Living one; and I¹ was dead, and behold, I am alive² for evermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades. (19) Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to

¹ Gr. *became*.. ² Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

- All is comprehended in the impression made by His countenance as such, which could only be compared with the brilliancy of the sun, when it shines with its most complete and undivided strength. It presents a picture of His divine glory. For this reason the Seer at sight of
- 17 this falls prostrate like one dead. Sinful man cannot see the brilliancy of the divine glory without dying. But Christ, putting His hands upon him, commands him not to be afraid. He is, as God Himself is (cf. i. 8), the First and the Last, who was from the beginning and will be
- 18 to the end. He is the Living One. It is true that He once was dead; but for the very reason that He passed through death unto life, death can no longer harm Him, and He is the eternally Living One. Now He has the power to deliver others also from death. He possesses the keys which open the doors of the region of the dead. He is therefore able to breathe new life into the Seer who has fallen down as though he were dead. He can assign to him the task for which He has called him.
- 19 First of all he is to write down what he has seen, so that all may learn that Jesus, who has died and has risen again, now lives as a High Priest in heaven eternally coequal with God. But the second task of the prophet is to interpret the aspect of the times and to show what was pleasing to God and what was hostile to Him in what he saw, and how the fulfilment of the divine promises and the judgments of God was being prepared. This was to come to pass in the future.

REVELATION

[II, 1-2]

pass hereafter; (20) the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest ¹in my right hand, and the seven golden ²candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven ²candlesticks are seven churches.

II To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden ²candlesticks: (2) I know thy works, and thy toil and

¹ Gr. upon. ² Gr. lampstands.

First he is to consider what he has to see and to hear in this vision. But to do this he must know the mysterious significance of the seven stars in His hand, which are visible from every point of view. They are the 20 protecting angels of the seven congregations which, because they are under the almighty protection of Christ, can become guardians of the congregations entrusted to their care. The seven golden candlesticks are the image of the seven congregations themselves. These, as the possessors of the divine truth, are the bearers of the light for the world. Christ, who is in the midst of His congregations, as He has promised, and who knows exactly all their conditions, will call the heavenly guardians of these congregations to an account for their condition. The prophet hears, how He distributes to each one praise or blame, exhortation or warning, promise or threats, and he is to write down what he hears in the seven Apocalyptic Letters.

The first letter describes the condition of affairs in 1 the congregation in Ephesus, where, according to trustworthy tradition, John was settled. With regard to this congregation, and in direct connection with the image which the prophet had seen in the vision, Christ describes Himself as He whose right hand holds the stars so that nobody can take them away from Him, and as He who walks among the golden candlesticks, in order to examine each one of them. But what He 2

¹patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; (8) and thou hast ¹patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary. (4) But I have *this* against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. (5) Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent

¹ Or, *steadfastness*.

has learned concerning the conduct of these congregation, He holds up before their guardian angel as his work, which Christ well knows, because it is his recognized duty to protect them against evil. In two respects He can praise the congregation in Ephesus. They have had a great deal of trouble with some among their people, who claimed to be the apostles of a new doctrine. This, as we have already repeatedly heard in the New Testament writings, was the doctrine of a false carnal freedom, which by misinterpretation was interpolated in the Pauline teachings after the departure of that Apostle. As soon as the congregation, after a careful investigation, had discovered these to be lying apostles, and when all their efforts to convict them of their error had been fruitless, they were no longer able to bear with them but excluded 8 them. On the other hand, the congregation had borne everything that they were called upon to endure from non-Christians on account of the name of Christ and 4 throughout their tribulations they did not tire in patience. But Christ has one thing to blame them for. In the midst of the struggle against this heresy (cf. Matt. xxiv. 12) and in the daily anxiety concerning the danger caused by the enemies of Christ, their brotherly love, which in the earliest times of the congregation had been so strong, had become cold. For this the congregation is to repent, by remembering from what height of Christian life they have fallen, and they are 5 to exhibit this life again after their former conduct. If

REVELATION

[II, 6-7]

and do the first works ; or else I come to thee, and will move thy ¹ candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. (6) But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. (7) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the ² Paradise of God.

¹ Gr. *lampstand*.

² Or, *garden* : as in Gen. 2. 8.

not, then He must come as their Judge and must remove the candlestick, which has been entrusted to the angel, i. e. take their high calling away from the congregation ; for a congregation which in their love for the brethren is not a shining example to the world, can no longer be the light of the world. After uttering this terrible threat, Christ repeats the declaration that He is in perfect harmony with them in their hatred of the conduct of those heretical teachers, who are here, probably with a symbolical signification, called Nicolaitans. But we are not to believe that Christ has literally dictated this letter to the Apostle. The Spirit of prophecy taught 6 him to formulate in words what he had heard in the vision. Christ in that vision had given both praise and blame to the congregation in Ephesus. And what is said to this individual congregation is intended for all congregations, who hear this word of prophecy. No faithfulness in the confession of the truth, whether against heresy or against the world in its hostility to Christ, can preserve its high calling to a congregation, unless they prove this calling by their love for the brethren. Each one is commanded in a special sense to take up the fight against Satan, who in many ways tries to seduce them from their faith or from the life consistent with this faith. But he who overcomes in this contest, for him the most glorious reward is in store. Above, in the perfected kingdom of God, as in primeval Paradise, grows the tree of life from which man, because he had

(8) And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write :

These things saith the first and the last, who ¹ was dead, and lived *again* : (9) I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the ² blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. (10) Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer : behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; ³ and ye shall have ⁴ tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

¹ Gr. *became*, ² Or, *reviling*. ³ Some ancient authorities read *and may have*. ⁴ Gr. *a tribulation of ten days*.

become sinful, was not permitted to eat, but from which he who overcomes shall be satisfied with the blessedness of eternal life.

- 8 To the congregation in Smyrna Christ, according to i. 17-18, describes Himself as the one who has passed through death unto eternal life, which He had from the beginning, because He intends to assure the congregation that they shall do likewise. For this congregation
- 9 He has only praise. It is a congregation composed of Jewish believers, such as we have learned to know in James ii. 5. Poor in earthly possessions, but rich in spiritual gifts, they are oppressed by the unbelieving section of their nation, who slander them as the confessors of a false Messiah (cf. James ii. 7), and who while boasting to belong to the people of redemption, in
- 10 reality are a synagogue of Satan. The Smyrnæans are not to be afraid of the Devil, who rules over their opponents, though these will bring upon them greater sufferings than those they have endured. No doubt, they will suffer imprisonment, which is intended to bring them to a denial of their faith, but this tribulation is to continue only for a short time, a period here mystically described as ten days in duration. The prophet hopes, that the Gentile government, which the unbelieving Jews are urging to persecute the believing Jews, will soon be convinced of the innocence of the

REVELATION

[II, 11-15]

(11) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

(12) And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write :

These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword :

(13) I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is ; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days ¹ of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth. (14) But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. (15) So

¹ The Greek text here is somewhat uncertain.

latter. At the end, if they should be compelled to prove their faithfulness by death as martyrs, He who has passed through death to life, will give them the crown of life in the sense implied in James i. 12. The 11 admonition that is founded upon this for all congregations reminds us that the enemies can indeed kill the body, but that he who overcomes the temptation to fall away, cannot be touched by the second death, which leads to eternal destruction.

To the congregation at Pergamus Christ describes 12 Himself, according to the image found in i. 18, as He whose judicial sentence strikes with a sharp edge, because in this instance He intends to pass a sharp sentence. It is indeed true, that the congregation, which was estab- 18 lished at the seat of a Gentile supreme court, through the persecution which Satan, who, as it were, sat enthroned there, had through this court brought upon them, had not been forced into unfaithfulness. They had continued to confess Jesus even when one of the disciples, whom Jesus Himself had selected as His witnesses, was put to death on account of his faithfulness. But Christ 14 has one thing for which He blames the congregation. 15 They have suffered the adherents of the teaching of

hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. (16) Repent therefore : or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth. (17) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.

-
- the Nicolaitans to continue among them, whose doctrine was like that through which Balaam taught Balak to persuade the Israelites to commit adultery and idolatry. (Num. xxv. 1). For even if they do not exactly accept this false doctrine and spread it, nevertheless through their way of life, which is in accordance with this doctrine, they induce the congregation to eat of meat sacrificed to the idols, which is an idolatrous abomination in the eyes of the Apostle, according to Acts xv. 20, 29, and to indulge in sexual excesses. The penance that is imposed upon the congregation consists in a demand, that they exclude from their communion all those who in any way follow these loose principles. If they do not agree to this, then He must come Himself and with His inexorable sentence inflict this punishment upon these deceivers. But all the congregations are to
- 16 know how great is the danger of compromising with such soul-endangering deceivers. For only he who overcomes such a temptation will eventually eat of the food of heaven which nourishes him to eternal life, and which is yet hidden, since only in the form of manna had this food in olden times sustained the Israelites in the wilderness. And just as in the courts he who pronounces another one innocent deposits a white stone for the accused, so Christ in the final judgment will deposit only for such an one such a stone upon which his name is found inscribed, and this makes him as one of whom the

REVELATION

[II, 18-22]

(18) And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write :
 These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a
 flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass : (19)
 I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and
¹patience, and that thy last works are more than the first.
 (20) But I have *this* against thee, that thou sufferest ²the
 woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess ; and she
 teacheth and seduceth my ³servants to commit fornication,
 and to eat things sacrificed to idols. (21) And I gave her time
 that she should repent ; and she willeth not to repent of her
 fornication. (22) Behold, I do cast her into a bed, and them
 that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except

¹ Or, *stedfastness*.
² Gr. *bondservants*.

³ Many authorities, some ancient, read *thy wife*.

eternal Judge approves. What name that is can only
 be known to him who receives the stone, because he
 alone knows as what the Judge has declared him to be.

Things were still worse in the congregation in Thya- 18
 tira, for which reason Christ here describes Himself in
 His entire majesty as the Son of God, who possesses
 divine omnipotence and omniscience (cf. i. 14, 15). Al-
 though in this case the congregation as a whole, through
 the love which it has demonstrated in services to the 19
 poor and to the sick, and through the faith which it has
 proved in its patience, has even made progress, yet among
 them a certain woman openly plied her vocation whom
 John, in typical language, calls Queen Jezebel, who in 20
 ancient times induced the Israelites to commit fornica-
 tion and idolatry (2 Kings. ix. 22). She claimed to
 be a prophetess of the new carnal doctrine of the Nicolai-
 tans and led astray many servants of Christ, i. e. mem-
 bers of the congregation, to commit fornication and eat
 of the sacrificial meat of the idols. It seems that very
 earnest admonitions to repentance had already been ad- 21
 dressed to them, but had proved fruitless. Now Christ
 intends to convert their bed of voluptuousness into one
 of sickness, and all of those who have suffered themselves

they repent of ¹her works. (23) And I will kill her children with ²death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works. (24) But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. (25) Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come. (26) And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to

¹ Many ancient authorities read *their*.

² Or, *pestilence* Sept., Ex. 5. 3, &c.

- to be misled by her to sinful deeds, by which they had broken their vows of faithfulness to God, are to be visited by severe tribulations. Her followers, however, 23 who have been induced by her to declare the same doctrine that she does, are to suffer death, and that too in a most terrible manner. In this way it is the purpose of Christ, to prove Himself in the sight of all the congregations who have taken offense at these deeds, as the Searcher of hearts, to which fact the fiery glance of His eye already points; and also the just Judge. As such He will distinguish in the impending judgment of punishment between those who deceive and those who are deceived. But the members of the congregation, who 24 will have nothing to do with this teaching, because its adherents imagined that they were the first to penetrate the depths of God and yet had only searched out the depths of Satan, and who had perhaps been persuaded that if others begin to put upon the Christian the observation of individual commandments of the Old Testament, that they in the end would be made subject 25 to the whole law, these He comforts with the statement 26 that no new obligations are to be imposed upon them (cf. Acts. xv. 28, 29). They are only to adhere to their former walk as they have been instructed (cf. v. 19), until His return, and thereby to overcome all temptations to sinful deeds until the end. For as, according

REVELATION

[III, 1-2]

him will I give authority over the ¹nations; (27) and he shall rule them with a rod of ²iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father: (28) and I will give him the morning star. (29) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

III And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead. (2) Be thou watchful,

¹ Or, *Gentiles*.

² Or, *iron: as vessels of the potter, are they broken*.

to Ps. ii. 7, 8, the victory and the dominion over all the 27 Gentiles are promised Him as the Son of God, as is 28 already indicated by the feet which are like burning brass, thus in the end, He will give to them victory over those who are destined for destruction, when the time of the consummation of redemption, like the morning star, shall rise above them in its glory. In contrast to the first three letters, in which the exhortation to hear 29 the final promise precedes, the promise here, as in the three following letters, constitutes the close of the epistle.

To the congregation in Sardis, Christ describes Him- 1 self as He who, like God Himself (cf. i. 4), possesses the sevenfold Spirit, and thereby knows the condition of the congregation in every respect, even in these matters in which outwardly it seems to be different from what it is, and also as He whose angels are the guardian angels of the congregations (cf. i. 20), because He is able to effect what is necessary in the case of those to whom these letters are addressed. This is especially true in the case of a congregation like the present one, which is described as evidencing much life, because it has shown great power of faith, especially through its energetic rejection of the Nicolaitan heresies, but nevertheless it is dead, because it lacks effective manifestations of faith. For this reason it must rouse 2

and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die : for I have ¹ found no works of thine perfected before my God. (3) Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear ; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments : and they shall walk with me in white ; for they are worthy. (5) he that overcometh shall

¹ Many ancient authorities read *not found thy works*.

- itself out of this state of an inactive faith, with which it rests content, and thereby also is to strengthen those members who are already at the very point of losing their life of faith. For, when He examined them, He did not find in the congregation any of those deeds that are well-pleasing in the sight of God. For this
- 8 reason the congregation is to remember, how it had received the proclamation made to it, and it yet in principle accepts it. Henceforth it must constantly follow the word it has heard. The change of mind that is demanded is to consist in this. The Lord requires watchfulness. They must at all times have their eyes open for that which Christ demands, or He will come unexpectedly, as does the thief in the night, with His judgment and punishment, if He does not find them as He demands at all times to find them. There are, indeed, some few in the congregation who might be mentioned by name, who have not polluted their garments.
- 4 Their manner of life is pure ; by it their inner character becomes outwardly visible, while some, by failing to demonstrate their faith in the fulfilment of their duty, as well as through the sins of the Nicolaitans, pollute their garments. The former are eventually to enter into the heavenly glory, which they share with Him. They are to be clad in white garments, the symbol of their being declared righteous in the judgment, as they are
- 5 deserving of this glory. But he who through constant

REVELATION

[III, 6-8

thus be arrayed in white garments ; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (6) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

(7) And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write :

These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth : (8) I know thy works (behold, I have ¹set before thee a door opened, which none

¹ Gr. *given*.

watchfulness overcomes the temptation to spiritual sloth, is eventually to be covered like them with the white garment, symbolical of their righteousness. Christ will not erase the name of such an one from the book of life, in which their names are already enrolled, because they are destined to eternal life. From that book, however, shall be erased the names of all those who fail constantly to prove their Christian faith by their works. On the contrary, as He promises in Matt. x. 32, He will confess the names of His true disciples before the tribunal of His Father, and before the angels gathered around Him. This letter closes with 6 an admonition to all the congregations to take heed to its warnings.

As between the first and the third letter, there is to be found one which contains only praise, so here one of this kind appears between the preceding and the last letter. In this case the address is made to the congregation in Philadelphia. As this congregation is Jewish-Christian in character, Christ describes Himself to them as the true Messiah (cf. John vi. 29), who possesses supreme authority over the Messianic kingdom, in which all the glory of the typical kingdom of David is consummated (cf. Is. xxii. 22). He shall receive into this kingdom or exclude from it whomsoever He will, without let or hindrance. For this is a mission congregation, whose 8

can shut), that thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name. (9) Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and ¹worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. (10) Because thou didst keep the word of my ²patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of ³trial, that *hour* which is to come upon the whole ⁴world, to ⁵try them that dwell

¹ The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature, or to the Creator. ² Or, *steadfastness*. ³ Or, *temptation*. ⁴ Gr. *inhabited earth*. ⁵ Or, *tempt*.

chief purpose it is to gain for salvation those of their own people who are yet unbelievers; and it is Christ who gives to them the favorable opportunity to lead many into His kingdom and who removes all hindrances to their missionary activity. It is not the congregation which has of itself the ability for this work; for it is a small congregation, and probably consists, as was the case in Smyrna, of the poor and the lowly from among the Jews. But these, when a critical period was at hand, did according to the word of Christ, and openly confessed His name before the people of their nation.

- 9 Failure under such circumstances is impossible. Members of that synagogue of Satan, who cannot truthfully count themselves as belonging to the chosen people, will come, and as Is. xlix. 28; lx. 14, describes the conversion of the Gentiles, will do obeisance to them as the true people of God, because they recognize, that it is the Messiah who has chosen them to be the objects of His love. And when finally these great judgments of God
- 10 go forth over the world, with the purpose of bringing men to repentance,—the Seer is yet to behold the coming of these judgments,—then Christ will protect His saints, because they have faithfully kept, i. e. have heeded His word, which admonishes to patience amid the oppressions caused by the synagogue in its hostility to Christ. They are only to see to it that

REVELATION

[III, 11-14]

upon the earth. (11) I come quickly : hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown. (12) He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the ¹temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more : and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name. (18) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

(14) And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write :

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness,

¹ Or, *sanctuary*.

they adhere to His word in the future until the near 11
return of Christ, so that nobody succeeds in robbing
them of the crown of victory by inducing them to fall
away. This crown of victory consists in this, that they 12
are eventually to stand in the perfected kingdom of
God as glorious pillars, ornaments of the temple of
God. Such pillars can no more be shaken than they
can, since they can never be removed from this king-
dom. For upon their brows the name of God is in-
scribed, which shows that they belong to Him ; and
also the name of the perfected kingdom of God, which
the Seer is yet to behold as the city of God descending
from the heavens, the new Jerusalem ; as also the
name of the Messiah Himself, which He is eventually
to bear when He has brought to its completion the re-
demptive work of His God in this city. These sayings 13
all the congregations are to hear.

To the congregation in Laodicea Christ describes
Himself as bearing the highest name, the name of God
Himself (cf. Is. lxxv. 16). It is He who pronounces His 14
Amen to every prayer by hearing it ; it is He who alone
can truthfully testify of the future, because His testi-
mony is absolutely reliable ; He is the One who was in
the beginning, when the world was created, and for
this reason knows beforehand the end of all created

the beginning of the creation of God : (15) I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot. (16) So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. (17) Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked : (18) I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich ; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest ; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. (19) As many as I love, I reprove and chasten : be zealous

-
- 15 things. The congregation is neither perfectly indifferent to Him, nor does it display any warm zeal for His
 16 cause. Oh, that it were either the one or the other ; either cold, for then they could yet be enkindled with warmth, whereas if the salvation they have experienced fails to fill them with real warmth, they are like lukewarm water, which men spew out because of its disgusting taste. The reason for this is the self-satisfaction of the congregation, which thinks that it is rich and no more in need, although in reality it is in a lamentable condition on account of its poverty, blind-
 17 ness and nakedness. Christ can only advise the Laodiceans that if they are really so rich, they should buy of Him what in truth they need. This means to beg of Him the true riches, which is like genuine gold, that has been purified by fire, namely, the true righteousness, which like a white garment will not permit them to appear any longer in the disgraceful nakedness of a faith that is not proved by works. They should moreover buy of Him an eyesalve, which will enable them to see their true condition. Severe is the judgment
 19 which the Lord pronounces on this congregation. But just because He loves them He points out their failings,

REVELATION

[IV, 1

therefore, and repent. (20) Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (21) He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne. (22) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

IV After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, *a voice* as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must ¹ come to pass here-

¹ Or, *come to pass. After these things straightway, &c.*

in order to educate them to the burning zeal, in which they are to show their change of mind. Begging, as it 20 were, He stands at their door and knocks; and if they admit Him and make room for His reformatory words, then He will again enter into full communion with them, which blessedness is pictured by the sharing of a meal together. But something higher is yet in store 21 for him who overcomes his indifference and self-satisfaction. For as Christ, by overcoming all temptations, up to the highest and last triumph of His passion and death, was exalted to participate in God's universal dominion, so they too are eventually to be exalted to the government of the new world with Him. And for 22 the last time it is said, that all the congregations are to hear what the Spirit of prophecy says to them.

After this the prophet had a second vision. This is 1 the vision of the book with the seven seals. He sees a door opening in the heavens, and the same voice, which with the sound of the trumpet had announced the beginning of the first vision, commands him to ascend, and promises to show him things which are yet in the future, since the first vision dealt chiefly with the present condition of the congregations. But this is only the introduction to the vision. For at this point the

after. (2) Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; (3) and he that sat *was* to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon. (4) And round about the throne *were* four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones *I saw* four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold. (5) And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the

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- 2 Seer in the Spirit is transferred into the heavenly presence chamber. Upon the throne sits He whom no
 8 name can perfectly describe. But He is to be recognized by the blinding brilliancy of His appearance, which can be compared only with glittering jewels and is reflected in the clouds that surround Him like the
 4 mild light of an emerald-green rainbow. Surrounding the throne of God there are seated upon thrones the twenty-four elders, the heavenly representatives of those who have prevailed, to whom this seat had been promised in iii. 21, since they carry the white garments of immaculate righteousness and the golden crowns of victory. For before the throne of God there stands from eternity in its perfect state that which in time can only gradually be developed as the goal of the divine counsels. It is the congregation of God which has existed through all times, and is represented by twelve elders from the people of the twelve tribes and twelve from the congregation of the twelve Apostles, since the former began what was completed by the
 5 latter. The lightning and thunder and the warring of the storm, which proceed from beneath the throne, mark it as the throne of judgment, from which are to go forth the judgments of God, which the prophet is to predict. The seven burning torches of fire in front of

REVELATION

[IV, 6-8

seven Spirits of God; (6) and before the throne, as it were a ¹sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst ²of the throne, and around about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. (7) And the first creature ~~was~~ like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature ~~was~~ like a flying eagle. (8) And the four living creatures, having

¹ Or, *glassy sea*.

² Or, *before*. See ch. 7. 17; comp. 5. 6.

it signify, as he himself says, the manifold manifestations of the prophetic Spirit, who will instruct the Seer in reference to things which are to come hereafter. The floor of the divine presence chamber, which John 6 sees extending in front of the throne, is formed by the firmament of heaven. This he compares with a sea of transparent crystalizing glass, because this firmament, according to Gen. i. 7, is composed of the waters above the firmament. The throne is regarded as in semi-circular form, so that two of the living creatures which surround it stand within the circle and two about it in the rear. These are the heavenly representatives of the animate creation, as this also is considered as existing from eternity in the counsels of God, to which already the fact that there are four of these points, as these recall the four corners of the earth. The eyes which cover them on all sides are a symbol of their constant watchfulness; for the animate creations, as such, know no sleep. Each of these four creatures represents by its similarity one of their four classes; for the lion is the most powerful among the wild animals, as the young steer is among the domestic, and the eagle among the birds; the third has a human-like face, because the inhabitants of the earth are closer to the animals of the earth than to the birds of the heavens. The fact that each of these has six wings is the sign of 8 their readiness to render service, since animate creatures, as God pictures these before Himself in His

each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within : and they have no rest day and night, saying,

Holy, holy, holy, *is* the Lord God, the Almighty,
who was and who is and ¹ who is to come.

(9) And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth ²for ever and ever, (10) the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth ²for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

(11) Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power : for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.

¹ Or, *who cometh.*

² Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

counsels, are at all times to be ready to fulfil His commands. To intimate the ever watchful readiness and service of God's creation mention is again made of the eyes, which are found in the outside and on the inside of the wing. But their chief work is to glorify God as Him who is thrice holy, the Almighty and the Eternal One, who was and is and will come in the future consummation of all things. But as often as they greet

9 Him that liveth for ever and ever with their praise and

10 thanksgiving, the representatives of the new creation whom the redemption in the congregation of God in the Old and in the New Covenant has produced, fall down and worship Him. They cast down their crowns of victory before Him, in order to confess, that the

11 glory which they have attained belongs to Him alone. For He, who has become their God and Lord, by entering into a personal communion and relationship with them, is alone worthy to receive not only glory and honor, but also power, which has been made known to them by the manner in which He carries out His redemptive counsels in their care. They know not only that He has created all things, but also that it is

REVELATION

[V, 1-3]

V And I saw¹ in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals. (2) And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book,

¹ Gr. *on*.

His gracious design of redemption, on account of which all things existed from the beginning and were by Him created.

The description of the heavenly presence chamber 1 merely forms the introduction to the vision of the book with the seven seals, which lies on the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, because He is to offer it for the purpose of having it opened. The writer has in mind a parchment roll, which is covered with writing both on the inside which is rolled around the staff, as also on the reverse side, because the rich theme of the record was not exhausted by the ordinary writing on one side of the sheet. It is the book in which the counsels of God concerning the future have been written; and the fact that it is closed with seven seals, that is, as tightly as possible, suggests how extremely difficult it is to attain to a knowledge of these counsels. Thereupon an angel of the higher order appears, who 2 with the loud cry of a herald asks the whole world, who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals? It must be opened, if its contents are to become known; but it can be opened only if the seals, with which it is closed, are broken. But here it is not of importance, where and how these seals have been attached, because the contents of the book are surely not to be read; but it is important, that, so surely as the book is only a symbol of the already fixed purposes of the divine counsels, the loosening of the seals is merely a symbolical action, which represents the ability to attain to a knowledge of the contents of the book. In consequence

and to loose the seals thereof? (3) And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. (4) And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon: (5) and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof. (6) And I saw ¹ in the midst of the throne and of the four living

¹ Or, *between the throne with the four living creatures, and the elders.*

of the question of the angel, it appears that in the whole 8 realm of creation, in heaven and on earth and in the 4 region of the dead, there is no one able or worthy to 5 open the book and examine its contents. When the Seer was in deep sorrow on this account, because now the secret of the divine counsels would forever remain hidden, one of the elders comforts him. For the congregation of those who prevailed has already discovered that He, who is the Mediator of the redemption, is also able to reveal the counsels of God in reference to the consummation of salvation. He is the first of those who prevailed, by giving the greatest proof of His obedience in voluntarily undergoing death, and has thus conquered the Devil, in this way showing Himself to be the powerful Lion of the tribe of Judah, in whom the prophecy spoken concerning his tribal ancestor is to be fulfilled (Gen. xlix. 9). He it is who has sprung from the root of Jesse (cf. Is. xi. 10) and has, like His ancestor, victoriously established the kingdom of consummation. He indeed has purposed not only to procure redemption, but also to prove His ability to reveal the final outcome of all the divine redemptive counsels.

6 For the first time He who has been announced in such a solemn way now appears, and does so in the midst of the throne with the four living creatures on the one side and the twenty-four elders on the other, i. e. surrounded by them in a wide circle. It is a Lamb such as Is. liii.

REVELATION

[V, 7-9]

creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the ¹ seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. (7) And he came, and he ² taketh it out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. (8) And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (9) And they sing a new song, saying,

¹ Some ancient authorities omit seven.

² Gr. *kath taken*.

7, describes the Messiah to be on account of His uncomplaining patience in suffering, and the traces of the violent death He suffered are yet to be seen in Him. But it bears the symbols of divine omnipotence and divine omniscience. For the horn is the standing symbol of power; and the number seven, which on all occasions marks that which is divine, points to the fact, that it is the full divine omnipotence which characterizes the Lamb. The Lamb also possesses the seven Spirits, through whom the Spirit of God surveys and marshals the whole world. This is indicated by the seven eyes. Not Jesus merely as the exalted Christ, but that Jesus, already, who, during His career upon earth died for us, 7 here receives this book from the hand of God, in order to reveal the counsels of God in reference to the future. As He receives the book, the living creatures and the elders fall down before the throne. But of the latter 8 each one has a harp on which to accompany their hymns of praise, and golden bowls of incense, because in these they bring before His face the prayers of the saints, that is, of the congregation upon earth. But their 9 hymn of praise is one that is new, because the heavenly representatives of this congregation glorify the salvation which has only now been completed, which salvation makes Him worthy to reveal the counsels of God concerning the consummation of redemption, by loosen-

Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, (10) and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth.

(11) And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; (12) saying with a great voice,

Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

(13) And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on

ing the seals of the book of the future, since only through His redemption has He made these counsels certain. For through His bloody death He has, as with a ransom, bought back those who had become the slaves of sin, and made them henceforth to be God's holy ones. They are men of all peoples, of all languages (cf. Dan. iii. 4), and constitute the kingdom, as Christ desired to found it.

- 10 These God alone rules, and now already do they serve Him as priests, and in the future more perfect state they shall rule over a new universe. At this point John beholds, widely circling around, innumerable hosts of
- 11 angels (cf. Dan. vii. 10) about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders; and he hears these greet the Lamb that was slain with a sevenfold doxology, in which He is lauded as worthy to receive everything that can enhance His glory. But especially they laud both the power, by which He has through His death won the victory, and the wealth of redemptive blessings, which He has won thereby; the wisdom, which opens to Him a view of the future; and the strength, which carries out its purpose in spite of all resistance. For these
- 13 things He is to be praised and glorified. But in this doxology all creation joins; and not only the heavenly

REVELATION

[VI, 1

the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying,

Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, ¹for ever and ever.

(14) And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and ²worshipped.

VI And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying

¹ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

² See marginal note on ch. 3. 9.

representatives of animate creation, as this stands before God, but everything which exists as reality in heaven and on earth and beneath the earth, animate and inanimate. But their glorification cannot be intended for the Lamb alone, but in an important sense also for the Creator who sits upon the throne. In accordance with the four kinds of creation, this homage is expressed in four glorifying predicates which are ascribed to Him as being worthy of them. The four living creatures seal this glorification with their Amen; and the elders fall down and worship. For the highest fervor of 14 adoration cannot be expressed in words.

Since the contents of an actual book can be read only after all the seals which fasten it have been broken, it is here implied, that the opening of the separate seals is only a symbolical action, signifying the gradual unfolding of those future events, that occur in accordance with the counsel of God written on this book. These events are described by the seer in a series of tableaux, which imply, that the events which were already predicted by Jesus during His career on earth constitute the consummation of all the divine counsels in reference to the future. At the opening of each one of the first 1 four seals, one of the four living creatures calls upon the seer to approach and see the vision. The fact that in connection with the opening of the first seal this

as with a voice of thunder, Come.¹ (3) And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer.

(3) And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come.¹ (4) And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take ²peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

(5) And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come.¹ And I saw, and behold, a black

¹ Some ancient authorities add *and see*.

² Some ancient authorities read *the peace of the earth*.

voice resounds with a voice as that of thunder, indicates, that here the basis of all predictions concerning the future is under consideration, namely the return of the Messiah, from which event Jesus at all times starts in His prediction. For the rider, who, like the Roman triumphant conquerors, comes upon a white horse with
 2 the far-striking bow that slays every enemy from a distance, and even before He starts out to battle receives the crown of victory, because He is absolutely sure of conquering, and who indeed conquers from the moment He starts out, in order to gain victory upon victory, can be none other but Christ returning in victory. Jesus has
 3 predicted as the signs preceding His return, among
 4 others, war, famine and pestilence (Matt. xxiv. 7); and this prediction is confirmed for the Seer in three corresponding tableaux. For the rider on the fiery-colored horse who carries a great sword and points out the breaking of the second seal, since the redness of fire, according to 2 Kings iii. 22, is the color of blood, signifies war, which drives peace from the earth so that men slay each other in wars between nations and within nations, as Jesus had prophesied. In the same way the rider upon
 5 the horse which is black, the color of mourning, who bears the scales in his hands, at the breaking of the third

REVELATION

[VI, 6-8]

horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. (6) And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, ¹A measure of wheat for a ²shilling, and three measures of barley for a ³shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.

(7) And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come.³ (8) And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name

¹Or, *A choenix* (i.e. about a quart) of wheat for a shilling.—implying great scarcity. Comp. Ezek. 4. 16 f.; 5. 16. ²See marginal note on Mt. 18. 28.
³Some ancient authorities add *and see*.

seal, is famine, in which bread is measured out sparingly to everybody. But it seems to the Seer, that a voice is heard from among the living creatures lamenting on account of the great cost of the most common necessities of life. If a measure of wheat is sold for a denar, then the daily wages (cf. Matt. xx. 2) of a man are barely sufficient to sustain one person; and if a man would support his whole family, he must suffer himself. It is true that one denar will also buy three measures of barley; but barley bread is the poorest of food (cf. on John vi. 9). The same voice also cries out and forbids the rider to damage the oil and the wine; but nobody can live on oil and wine; and this feature only shows, that the writer has in mind not famine occasioned by an ordinary lack of crops, but a terrible famine such as is produced by a long war. The breaking of the fourth seal, reveals a rider upon a horse, pale as a corpse. Here the name itself indicates that he is Death, who flings his victims as sacrifices to the realm of the dead following after him so that they are devoured and imprisoned there. In this connection the third of the signs predicted by Jesus is more fully explained to mean, that a large number of mankind described in the figurative language of the Apocalypse as a fourth, are to be destroyed by death. This end is accomplished by the sword, which the second rider carries, as also by the famine, which the

was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with ¹ death, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

(9) And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: (10) and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood

¹ Or, *pestilence*. Comp. Ch. 2. 28 marg.

third threatens to summon, and now also by the general mortality, as by the direful pestilence, such as Jesus had already predicted would follow the wars. To this is added the appearance of the wild beasts in the countries devastated by war, and thus robbed of their human inhabitants.

- 9 The opening of the fifth seal also brings confirmation of a prediction of Jesus. As in Luke xviii. 7-9, He had spoken of a time when the elect would, day and
 10 night, cry out, seemingly in vain, for the judgments of God which should bring them deliverance, and are not to find a refusal of their petition, because these judgments will come quickly enough, so at this point the seer hears the martyrs cry out aloud for the judgment of God, to bring down justice upon their murderers. He sees in spirit the souls of those who have been slain beneath the altar, upon which they have sacrificed their lives to God, when their blood was shed, because they had been faithful in obeying the word of God, and did not prove false to the testimony of Jesus in reference to the revelation of God which had appeared in Him. Probably a terrible slaughter of Christians had occurred shortly before the time of this vision. Later on we shall learn when and where it took place. Now these servants of God cry out to their Lord, who as the Holy One cannot permit such

on them that dwell on the earth? (11) And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should ¹ have fulfilled *their course*.

(12) And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sack-

¹ Some ancient authorities read *be fulfilled* in number. ² Esdr. 4. 36.

a crime to go unpunished among the inhabitants of the earth. He who is Lord as He needs must be, will certainly protect His servants. As an answer they receive a white garment, the symbol of God's recognition of their righteousness, through which the judgment which they desire has already passed, as far as they are concerned. But, as far as the judgment of these murderers is concerned, they must wait a while in patience. For, according to the prediction of Jesus, the judgment can come only when the measure of sin is full (Matt. xxiii. 32), and this will not be the case until the number of those who, according to the counsel of God are to be slain, has first become full. For they, as their fellow-servants have done, must first prove their faithfulness to their Lord by keeping His word. As their brethren, i. e. all the members of the Christian congregation have done, so must they stand fast by adhering to the faith in the testimony of Jesus. The breaking of the sixth seal confirms and explains what Jesus had said concerning the last signs that precede His return (Matt. xxiv. 29). There will occur no such earthquake as has occurred already here and there among the first signs (Matt. xxiv. 7), but a great one, which shall shake the earth in its very foundations, and thus give the signal for Christ's return. Now will take place that darkening of the sun, which Jesus had predicted, and the sky will become black, as if it had put on a mourning garment of hairy sackcloth; and the

cloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood ; (18) and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. (14) And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. (15) And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the ¹ chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains ; (16) and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : (17) for the great day of their wrath is come ; and who is able to stand ?

¹ Or, *military tribunes* Gr. *chiliarchs*.

moon will become red, like blood, so that it no longer
 13 gives light. If the stars which are set in the firma-
 14 ment (cf. Gen. i. 17) fall to the earth, as when a storm
 shakes the figs from the fig-tree, and if the firmament
 itself, which is spread over the earth like the cloth of
 a tent, disappears, as one rolls a book-roll together,
 then also the strongest portions of the earth (the
 mountains) and of the sea (the islands) will be moved
 from the places where they appeared to be rooted fast.
 Amid these signs of the approaching end of the world,
 anxiety and terror shall seize the inhabitants thereof.
 15 Be these as high as they may, such as are kings and
 16 their highest civil and military officials ; even if they
 felt themselves safe in their wealth and power ; be they
 slaves or free, they in their fear will seek some place of
 refuge, and, according to Hos. x. 8, will call upon the
 mountains and the rocks to hide them from the face of
 God and the wrath of the Lamb. For they see that
 17 the great judgment day of God has come, as Joel iii. 4
 has predicted ; but it is the Lamb, that once so patiently
 submitted to suffering and death, who now, since He
 has been exalted to God, returns, in order to make His
 enemies to feel His wrath. All the grace of God, which

REVELATION

[VII, 1-2]

VII After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. (2) And I saw another angel ascend

has once appeared in Christ, must be converted into wrath against those who, as the former vision has shown, have not only rejected this grace, but have engaged in bloody persecutions against those who continued steadfast in the grace concerning which He had testified.

Before the seventh seal is broken, something is shown to the seer in a new vision, which as an episode interrupts the series of tableaux, while at the same time it explains what has preceded as it also arouses interest in what he is to see in the following vision. He be- 1 holds four angels, who are set over the four winds, standing at the four ends of the earth. The fact that they are compelled to constrain these winds so that they do not in their fury break forth over the earth and everything upon the earth, shows that they are symbols of the divine judgments, which are at the point of breaking forth. What judgments these are, of which Jesus only predicated certain features, still remains a mystery to the seer, and this is only to be solved in the following vision. But one thing is now to be revealed to him. The believers are to be preserved from the judgments passed upon the general world. For the very reason that just before, in connection with the breaking of the sixth seal, fear and terror had been described as seizing upon the inhabitants of the earth together with the last of these signs preceding the final judgment, the Seer needs to be reassured, that the believers have nothing to fear from these judgments. An angel comes from the east, as indicat- 2

from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, (3) saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the ¹servants of our God on their foreheads. (4) And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel :

- (5) Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand ;
 Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand ;
 Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand ;

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

- ing his activity in the bestowal of blessing and salvation.
- 3 He commands the angels who control the storm-winds to restrain their outbreaks, until he and his associates have sealed the servants of God upon their foreheads, with the seal of the living God, which he brings with him. This symbolical action marks them as those having been chosen by God as His own in a special sense. They are to be preserved against the judgments which shall evidently break forth. And if we did not already know this, we might learn this from vi. 10 sqq, that only the believers are true servants of God. The certainty that God knows each one of them individually, the Seer learns from the fact, that he hears their exact number
- 4 mentioned. These of course cannot be the real numbers. The enumeration is merely intended to give a new indication concerning the character of these elect. But already in the Old Testament a people existed typically whom God had selected as the one which belonged to Him in a special sense, even the people of Israel. The Christian congregation is none other than the New Testament people of God. As the former consisted of twelve tribes, so the latter is represented as a people of twelve tribes the different parts of which are called
- 5 by the names of the tribes of that typical people of God,

REVELATION

[VII, 6-9]

- (6) Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand ;
Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand ;
Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand ;
 - (7) Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand ;
Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand ;
Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand ;
 - (8) Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand ;
Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand ;
Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.
 - (9) After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude,
which no man could number, out of every nation and of all
-

out of each of which so many thousand as there were 6 tribes are selected. Since everything is figurative in the Apocalypse and is set forth in concrete and scenic imagery these tribes are mentioned individually, beginning with Judah, because from this tribe the Saviour was descended. But as the place of Joseph is here taken by his two sons, of whom the first-born receives his father's name, it was necessary to omit one of the smaller tribes, in this case Dan, as is done in 1 Chron. iv.-vii. That there is no reference here to the real Israel or the believers out of Israel, is proved by the fact, that at that time there were no longer twelve separate tribes. The following vision shows us, moreover, the special reason why the congregation of God is here described under the symbol of this Old Testament type.

But the prophet is not to think that the believers are to be protected against all suffering because they are sealed in the manner thus described. They are to remain protected against the judgments of God ; but in the last times it is they especially who are to suffer great affliction at the hands of the inhabitants of the earth. The Seer is again transferred to the heavenly presence 9 chamber and sees a great multitude assembled before

VII, 10-14] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; (10) and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

(11) And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, (12) saying,

Amen: ¹ Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God ² for ever and ever. Amen.

(13) And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? (14) And I ² said unto him, My lord, thou knowest.

¹ Gr. *The blessing, and the glory, &c.*
² Gr. *have said.*

² Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

the throne of God and of the Lamb. They cannot be numbered; for God, the Searcher of hearts, alone knows, who and how many they are who remains faithful unto the end. But the prophet sees, as could perhaps have been expected, that they do not come only from among the people of promise, but from all peoples and languages. They wear white garments, such as, according to vi. 11, are given to the martyrs; and the palms in their hands show that they are conquerors. They are, as a matter of fact, already what the heavenly representations of the congregation of God as the ideals of the latter, according to iv. 4, indicate. But they confess aloud, that they owe their deliverance from sin and death exclusively to their gracious God and Saviour, who alone are capable of accomplishing perfect redemption. Then the entire choir of angels, who, as we saw in v. 11, are assembled around the throne, fall down and worship and seal this confession with their Amen and with the sevenfold doxology (v. 12). One of the elders causes the Seer to ask the question, who these conquerors are and whence they came, and at once answers, that they are those who

REVELATION

[VII, 15-17]

And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (15) Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his ¹ temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. (16) They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: (17) for the Lamb that is in the midst ² of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

¹ Or, *sanctuary*.

² Or, *before* ch. 4. 6; comp. 5. 6.

have come out of great tribulation such as had already been predicted by Jesus in Matt. xxiv. 21. What this tribulation was and how it would come, still remains hidden to the Seer, and only the history of later times will make this known. It is not exactly said, that they all have died as martyrs during this tribulation; but at any rate they have all proved their faith under trial. They do not for this reason wear the white garments which signify their righteousness, but because they have appropriated forgiveness of sin in the blood of Jesus through faith, and this faith has made them strong to overcome every trial caused by the tribulation of the last times. For this reason they have now been received 15 into perfect communion with God, and serve Him as priests, in accordance with the ideal of the perfected congregation of God. But in them the ideal of the Old Testament congregation (Lev. xxvi. 11) is also realized as the prophets have at all times predicted (cf. Ez. xxxvii. 26). God Himself raises His tent above and over them, because His gracious presence overspreads them to shield and bless them. They will henceforth 16 suffer no want, nor fiery heat of temptation, (Is. xlix. 17-10); for the Lamb that has been exalted to the throne of God will Himself be their good shepherd, and will

VIII And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. (2) And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets.

lead them to the fountains of the waters of eternal life, in the blessedness of which all want and all suffering of the earth will find an end. The revelation as to how this blessed goal is to be attained is reserved for later
 1 visions. It is true that in this vision the last seal also is broken by the Lamb, and this seal must bring the final judgment and the final consummation. But instead of in any way revealing the remaining menace to the Seer by new voices or vision, a silence is maintained for a short time in heaven. Now the Seer knows, that this is not to be revealed to him in this vision, which is at an end. By a fine touch, John indicates in the grammar of his expression, that the moment remains unknown when the actual breaking of the seal which is to reveal this final secret of the future takes place.

Here begins a new, namely, the third vision, as John indicates by giving it a special superscription. In this
 2 it is said that he had seen the seven angels, who stand directly in the presence of God (Luke i. 19), and are accordingly His highest and closest servants, and that trumpets were given to them. It is the trumpet vision, which is to begin here. In the former vision John saw only the innumerable hosts of angels around the heavenly throne, without any distinction of different orders, and entirely different forms appeared immediately in the presence of God. But on that occasion the Seer saw himself also transferred into heaven. Here he stands in the spirit before the golden incense altar, which in the temple in Jerusalem was set directly in front of the throne formed above the ark of the covenant by the

REVELATION

[VIII, 3-6]

(3) And another angel came and stood ¹over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should ²add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

(4) And the smoke of the incense, ³with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. (5) And the angel ⁴taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it ⁵upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

(6) And the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

¹ Or, at.

² Gr. give.

³ Or, for.

⁴ Gr. hath taken.

⁵ Or, into.

Cherubim. He sees how another angel with a golden 3
censer takes burning coal from the sacrificial altar, while
an abundance of incense is given him in order to make
the incense offering, in which the prayers of the saints
(cf. v. 8) are brought before God. For that John is
standing on the earth and not, as could be thought, in
the heavenly temple (vii. 15), is seen from the fact that
the incense of the sacrifice ascends to God from the hand 4
of the angels before he comes into the presence of God.
We know from vi. 10, that the chief contents of the
prayers of God's congregation in the presence of the Seer
are to the effect, that God would secure them justice
from their enemies; and these prayers are heard. For 5
the angel fills the censer again with burning coal from
the sacrificial altar and throws it down upon the earth.
Terrible natural phenomena at once result, such as we
saw in iv. 5, were symbolical of the great judgments of
God; but here according to vi. 12, earthquakes are yet
added. Now the prophet knows, that he will see those
judgments of God, which shall pass over the world that
is hostile to Christ, and from which, of course, all saints
who have been appealing for these judgments, will be
delivered. (cf. vii. 1 sqq). When those highest throne 6
angels come forward, and prepare to blow their trum-

(7) And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast ¹ upon the earth : and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

¹ Or, *into*.

pets, he knows, that each blast of the trumpet will announce one of these judgments which he is to witness. But he cannot be permitted to see the events themselves but only images of them, by which the character of these divine judgments is outlined. These, after the typical and figurative language of the Apocalypse, are the Egyptian plagues, which to the Seer are typical representations of God's judgments, but the latter are much more to be dreaded, than the former, because they will be more horrible. But it becomes perfectly clear now, why the saints of his own times were pictured to the Seer in the number of those who were sealed as the antitypes of God's congregation in the Old Covenant, i. e. the twelve tribes of the people (vii. 4, 8.) The people of Israel were delivered from the Egyptian plagues, just as now God's congregation in the New Testament is to be delivered from the judgments which overwhelm the world because of its hostility to Christ.

- 7 The first trumpet brings a rain of hail and fire, according to the type in Ex. ix. 23-24. But in order to show how much more horrible will be the judgment of God hereby indicated, both hail and fire are mixed with blood. That this is only a figure of the judgment is indicated by the fact, that not the whole earth but only a third part of it together with its trees and grasses are to suffer, although this is a greater portion than that prophesied in vi. 8. For it lies in the nature of the case that in each instance, in the coming judgments only a portion of the inhabitants of the earth are visited, now here and now there, although these judgments constantly in-

REVELATION

[VIII, 8-12]

(8) And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea : and the third part of the sea became blood ; (9) and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, *even* they that had life ; and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

(10) And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters ; (11) and the name of the star is called Wormwood : and the third part of the waters became wormwood ; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

(12) And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars ; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

crease in intensity. Notwithstanding this, the intention is to emphasize the fact, that wherever enemies of Christ are to be found, there are also present those who are to suffer by these judgments. For this reason the second 8 trumpet brings an immense mass of fire, like a flaming 9 mountain, which mass is thrown into the sea, and as in Ex. vii. 20, converts this into blood but again only to the extent of the third part of the water. Notwithstanding, as a result of this, not only a third of the living creatures of the sea die, but a third of the ships, upon which, perhaps men might have fled to escape the dangers on 10 land, are also burned. In the same way, through the 11 divine judgment of the third trumpet, the third part of the rivers and of the fountains of the water are poisoned, so as to cause death to many people who drink therefrom. In this case it is a star burning like a torch which falls upon them and is called by the name of Wormwood, because it is the bitter taste of the water thus changed by the supernatural wormwood which causes their death. 12 According to the typical character of the plague described in Ex. x. 21 sqq., this divine judgment of the fourth

(18) And I saw, and I heard ¹an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound.

IX And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss. (2) And he opened the pit of the abyss: and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by

¹ Gr. *one eagle*.

trumpet is described. Here it is made perfectly clear, that this judgment affects only a part of the inhabitants of the earth, since through a partial darkening of the luminaries of the heavens which shine during the day and during the night, these are to be deprived of only one third of their light. Just as the visions, which appeared at the opening of the first four seals, are described in a perfectly parallel manner, although the last three are of an entirely different character, so the similar judgments of God that take place in connection with the

18 first four trumpets differ essentially from those of the three last. Thus, an eagle, which flies in the zenith of the heavens, so that he can be seen and heard everywhere, cries out a threefold woe over the inhabitants of the earth, who are the victims of the judgments announced by the last three trumpets.

The fifth trumpet brings a judgment of God, which is described as like the plague of the locusts in Ex. x. 17-18 (cf. also Joel ii). But these are not the common locusts, but monstrous animals from hell, which like all the creatures of hell, have only so much power on earth as God gives them, in order to try and to punish

1 mankind. For this reason a star fallen from heaven, the symbol of a fallen angel, receives a key to the shaft

2 that leads from the earth into the depths of hell. After the angel has opened this there comes forth through

REVELATION

[IX, 3-7]

reason of the smoke of the pit. (3) And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. (4) And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. (5) And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man. (6) And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them. (7) And the ¹shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like

¹ Gr. *khenesses*.

it from the fire of the divine wrath which burns there, a terrible smoke, which darkens the sun and the air; and out of it comes forth a swarm of locusts, 8 which darkens the heavens (cf. Joel. ii. 10) and to these 4 power is now given such as scorpions possess. For these hellish locusts, unlike the ordinary locusts, do not harm any growth upon the earth but only men, and in this case only the unbelievers. For at this place it is now expressly stated, that this judgment of God, like all those which are here described, does not touch those who, according to vii. 3, have a seal upon their foreheads, that is, believers. While under other circumstances the locust swarms appear at intervals during the 5 period of five months, this terrible locust plague is to 6 continue during the whole period in which mankind is tormented by the stings of the scorpions, and this torment is so great that men will wish for death. They are not, however, to die but only to suffer torment. The form of these locusts is similar to that of the horses, 7 with which Joel ii. 4, already compares them, horses which are equipped for war, because their heads extend out as from a breastplate. Upon their heads there is a glitter as of golden crowns of victory, this being a

unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces. (8) And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. (9) And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. (10) And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. (11) They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek *tongue* he hath the name ¹ Apollyon.

(12) The first Woe is past: behold, there come yet two Woes hereafter.

(13) And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard ² a voice from

¹ That is, *Destroyer*.

² Gr. *one voice*.

sign that nothing can resist them, while their faces are
 8 human. Their feelers have grown long like women's hair, and their lion's teeth (cf. already Joel i. 6) indicate
 9 their wild greed for food. Their cuirasses are like iron armor, and the noise of their wings is like that of chariots of war, which, with the horses that draw them,
 10 go out to battle (cf. already Joel ii. 5). Their tails are like those of scorpions. These tails have stings, and here is found their power to torment mankind. But
 11 the leader of this army of locusts is the angel of the abyss, whose Hebrew name is translated for the Greek readers as the destroyer. Probably it is he to whom in v. i, the key of the abyss has been given. The whole description is, with all its details of horror, only intended to portray the terrible character of this
 12 judgment of God, with which the first woe, which is called out over the earth, has been followed. But two others are yet to come.

13 The divine judgment of the sixth trumpet is described after the example of the armies which God had so often brought up against His people for their punishment, and which generally came from the Euphrates. On this occasion the Apocalyptic armies came from the same place. But these are not human armies,

REVELATION

[IX, 14-18]

the horns of the golden altar which is before God, (14) one saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates. (15) And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men. (16) And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand : I heard the number of them. (17) And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone : and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions ; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone. (18) By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths.

but Satanic monsters, who are to bring about a much greater judgment. The Seer hears a voice sounding as from the golden incense altar, from which the prayers ascend against the enemies of the believers. The voice, coming from all the four corners of the altar demands, that this judgment shall yet come. For this purpose the sixth angel must be sent to 14 the Euphrates, in order to set free those four angels of 15 Satan, who are to lead those armies against the world at a time which has been determined as to day, month and year, for these are in fetters until this hour comes, so that only a third part of mankind may be destroyed. The Seer hears the number of these riders ; and this 16 number is so great that this fact alone indicates that the judgment is one that exceeds all others in its terrors. This becomes more apparent from the terrible appear- 17 ance of the horses and the riders, whose armor of triple hue is in harmony with the fact that fire, smoke and brimstone come forth from the mouths of the horses, 18 which have heads like lions. These hellish powers destroy one-third part of mankind, and even in passing by them men were wounded by their tails, which were like

(19) For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails; for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt. (20) And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not 'worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: (21) and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

¹ See marginal note on ch. 8. 9.

19 snakes, each with a head of its own. But now at the close it becomes clear, that all of these judgments of
 20 God, including the last and most terrible, were at the same time also admonitions to repentance, which, nevertheless, on the whole were not heeded. Men do not in repentance turn from the images which they have made with their own hands and in which they worshipped demons (cf. 1 Cor. x. 20), or perhaps they have wor-
 21 shipped the latter themselves directly. Nor will they turn from their gross heathen sins. It is clear from this, that this final judgment, which is the culmination of all the others is to be executed first of all in the case of the Gentile world; and as the statement does not yet follow, that thereby the second Woe has passed by, the Seer is to expect that a second part is yet to follow, namely, the judgment over the unbelieving Jews.

Before the second part of the second Woe appears, an interruption takes place, just as was the case in the vision of the seals (chap. vii.), and an entirely new vision, like an interrupting episode, is seen before the vision of the trumpets is finished. This gives the Seer information concerning everything he can expect in this trumpet vision. At this place it is clearly shown that the Seer has not been transferred, as in the vision of the seals, into heaven, but is standing on earth, where he had also seen all the judgments of God take place. For

REVELATION

[X, 1-3]

X And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud ; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire ; (2) and he had in his hand a little book open : and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth ; (3) and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth : and when he

he now sees another powerful angel descending from 1 heaven to earth. Like the angel who, in v. 2, asks for a person who can open the great book of the future, the present angel too is one of the higher order, and is, indeed, the very Angel of the Lord, who in the Old Testament appears so often as the highest messenger of God, in whom He speaks and in whom He is addressed. For the cloud that envelops him, and with which he is clothed, is none other than the cloud in which God Himself is accustomed to appear ; and the rainbow upon his head is none other than the reflection of the divine glory of His face, which can only be compared with the brilliancy of the sun, which glory, as in iv. 8, is reflected by the clouds. Even the lowest part 2 of the form, the very feet, shine like columns of fire. The angel has a small book in his hands ; but it is not closed, as was the book of the future, but is open. In it, as we shall see, there is but one thing recorded, namely, the blessed consummation of the divine redemptive plan. The angel places one foot upon the sea and the other upon the dry land as a token that his message is for the whole earth. The contents of 3 his message, which proclaims the judgment with the voice of a lion, and is like the voice of God Himself (Joel iv. 16), are indicated by the sevenfold thunder, which re-echoes this message. The prophet recognizes this thunder, which rolls through all the seven heavens, and in which God's own voice confirms the message of His

cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. (4) And when the seven thunders uttered *their voices*, I was about to write : and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. (5) And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, (6) and swore by him that liveth ¹ for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, ²and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be ³delay no longer : (7) but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his ⁴servants the prophets. (8) And the voice which I heard from heaven, *I heard* again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

¹ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.* ² Some ancient authorities omit *and the sea and the things that are therein.* ³ Or, *time.* ⁴ Gr. *bondservant.*

angel, which from the former vision we know is the
 4 announcement of the last judgment. He purposes to write down what their voices have spoken ; but a heavenly voice refuses him permission. This is to remain still hidden like a sealed secret. Now the Seer knows, that the manner in which this last judgment, the thunder of which he already hears rolling, is to take place, is not yet to be made known, not even after the seventh trumpet has sounded. But the angel of the Lord takes a solemn oath by the living God, Creator
 5 of heaven and earth, that on the day of the seventh
 7 trumpet, with which the final judgment is to come, even though it be still hidden, the blessed secret of God will *at once* be consummated. Therewith the completion of redemption is to come, the joyful announcement of which God has proclaimed to His prophets already in the Old Testament. Now the Seer knows, that this judgment is described in the little book which the angel holds in his hands ; and that he can here learn
 8 what it is because the book is opened. At the command

REVELATION

[XI, 1

(9) And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. (10) And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter. (11) And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again ¹ over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings. **XI** And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: ² and

¹ Or, *concerning*. Comp. Jn. 12. 16.

² Gr. *saying*.

of the heavenly voice he receives the book from the hand of the angel; but with this he is also directed to 9 swallow the book, i. e. indeed to taste the contents, but for the present keep them a secret. Now he learns what the angel has already told him before, namely, how sweet 10 it is to learn of the secret of this blessed consummation of redemption, but how bitter it is to be compelled to keep this a secret. This symbolical action indicates, that in this vision the blessed consummation is no more to be revealed than is the final judgment. The latter, indeed, is inseparably connected with the former. But at the same time he receives from the angel and from the heavenly voice, the comforting assurance, that what is yet hidden in this vision, is to be given to him in a 11 later vision, which he will be called upon to announce in a prophecy. He is then to prophesy as to nations and kings. But while the consummation of the world's doom is so far yet hidden, the consummation of the fate of Israel's doom which belongs to the second Woe (cf. to ix. 21), is now already being revealed.

We saw already in viii. 3 sqq. that the prophet in this vision has been set down before the temple in Jerusalem and its sacrificial altar, and in the Spirit sees what is 1 taking place in the sanctuary itself. Subsequently he is given a measuring rod in order to measure the temple house and the altar. But as the statement is added

one said, Rise, and measure the ¹temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. (2) And the court which is without the ¹temple ²leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the ³nations: and the holy city shall

¹ Or, sanctuary.

² Gr. cast without.

³ Or, Gentiles.

“and them that worship therein,” he knows that he is to think not of the external sanctuary, but of that which this external sanctuary symbolized, namely the place where God dwells and where people serve Him with the sacrifice of prayer. But henceforth only the true
 2 worshippers of God, believing Israel, are to be God’s people. In this case then the outer court, which even Gentiles were permitted to enter, is the unbelieving portion of the people, who, accordingly, by this measuring, are separated from the believing portion and are excluded from the true sanctuary. The latter is to be protected against the judgments of God, of which the others become the object. How this deliverance of believing Israel is to take place, is left for the following vision to show. But how the judgment comes over the unbelieving Israelites, the prophet can judge from the signs of the times, which his Lord directs him to interpret. For just at this time Jerusalem is being besieged by the Roman army, and the fall of the city, in the manner in which Jesus had prophesied, is immediately impending. The Seer knows that the city, and with it the unbelieving Israelites, by the counsel of God are already given over into the possession of the Gentiles. Now he announces in the spirit of prophecy, through which Christ reveals the future to him, that in the approaching period of disaster, in the time of the great judgments of God, which have been described in the preceding, the holy city will be trodden under the feet of the Gentiles, who will capture it. Naturally he cannot give the length of the time in years and human dates,

REVELATION

[XI, 8-6]

they tread under foot forty and two months. (3) And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. (4) These are the two olive trees and the two ¹ candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. (5) And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt

¹ Gr. *lampstands*.

but as in Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7, such a time of disaster is described figuratively as lasting for a period of three and a half years (cf. already Luke iv. 25; James v. 7), so here the figurative number of forty-two months is mentioned. But this whole period, when the divine judgments, through the supremacy of the Gentiles, shall weigh heavily upon the unbelieving Israel, is also for them a constant admonition to repentance, just as the divine judgments over the Gentile world are a warning 3 to the Gentiles (cf. ix. 20, 21). In Israel, however, this exhortation to repentance is strongly confirmed by the witnesses of Jesus, whom He has promised to send to the people as prophets (Matt. xxiii. 34). According to the style of the Apocalypse, which constantly depicts what is universal by concrete individual cases, this testimony is represented by two witnesses, who during the entire one thousand two hundred and sixty days of this time of tribulation, daily clad in sack raiment, expressive of their sorrow on account of the impenitence of the people, prophesy and appeal to them to repent. The prophet recognizes in them the two olive trees, concerning which Zechariah has prophesied (iv. 3.), i.e. those two bearers of the truth who are 4 anointed by the Spirit of God, and stand before the presence of God (cf. Zech. iv. 14), and are to serve Him as the light-bearers for the people on the way to redemption. In order to secure their activity during the time destined for them by God, they must not be touched, 5

them, in this manner must he be killed. (6) These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy : and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire. (7) And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. (8) And their 'dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. (9) And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their ¹ dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their

¹ Gr. *carcase*.

and, according to Jer. v. 14, their word must become a fire, which destroys their enemies, if these latter should dare to touch them or even entertain the desire of doing 6 so. They receive, as Elias did, the power of closing the heavens, so that it does not rain ; or, as Moses did, of changing water into blood ; or in other words, they are able to confirm the predictions by any plague which they bring upon the land.

7 But the activity of these prophets has also its limitations as determined by God. When these have been reached, then the beast from the abyss will begin its contest with them and will conquer and kill them. What kind of beast from the abyss this is, is to be revealed to the prophet only in the following vision. But it is clear here that it can come forth only from among the Gentiles 8 who are besieging Jerusalem. But the crime of slaying them is made all the greater by the fact, that their bodies lie unburied on the streets of the great city, which the Spirit of prophecy for this reason now describes as a Sodom and an Egypt, i.e., as the places of the greatest abominations of sin, which charge is already justified by the fact, that in this city their Lord was crucified. Again there is a time of disaster, three 9 and a half days, during which the Gentile peoples who

REVELATION

[XI, 10-13]

dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. (10) And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry ; and they shall send gifts one to another ; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. (11) And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet ; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. (12) And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud ; and their enemies beheld them. (13) And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell ; and there were killed in the earthquake ¹seven thousand persons : and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹ Gr. *names of men, seven thousand.* Comp. ch. 8. 4.

live in the city will rejoice at their disgrace and will not permit them to be buried. For all the inhabitants of the earth who hear of this will rejoice and celebrate 10 festivities, congratulating each other and giving each other gifts, because they themselves have suffered by the plagues which the two prophets brought over their land and thereby over the whole earth. 11 But after these three and a half days the situation 12 changes ; and here the prophetic speech reaches the lofty heights of the Old Testament prophecy, in which the prophet with his spiritual eye sees the things that are yet to come as already at hand. God must testify of Himself through them as He formerly did through Christ. A living spirit from God enters into them such as He in former times created when out of the dust He made a living man (Gen. ii. 7.) They are made alive again, and all who see them are overcome with great fear. Indeed, in the presence of their enemies they go heavenward ; just as Jesus ascended to heaven. After God had thus furnished the absolute testimony, that they were His messengers and had thereby given the people the greatest motive for repentance, the final great divine 13 judgment breaks forth over the people of Israel. This

XI, 14-15] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

(14) The second Woe is past : behold the third Woe cometh quickly.

(15) And the seventh angel sounded ; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said,

The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ : and he shall reign ¹ for ever and ever.

¹ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

is represented as a great earthquake, which devours one tenth of the city and kills seven thousand people, a number still so small in comparison with the innumerable hosts which the final judgment of God destroys among the Gentile peoples (cf. ix. 15, 18), that their names can yet be given. But in this case the judgment really causes the survivors to repent, so that they are filled with fear and give all honor to God. In this way, at all events, a remnant is still saved from Israel according to Old Testament prophecy (cf. Is. i. 9 ; x. 22, 28 ; and also Rom. ix. 27 sqq.) With this
14 the second part of the second Woe is also passed. But a third one follows.

15 We have learned from Chapter X. that the seventh trumpet will bring the final judgment and the final consummation. But in that chapter the prophet had already learned, that in this vision both of these are to be made known to him in detail. He in fact already hears voices in heaven, which declare, that just as the angel in x. 6-7, has solemnly declared, the final consummation has come with the final judgment. The government over the world, which the Devil had hitherto claimed in opposition to God, and which, on the whole, he had been able to maintain, is now given to God and to His Anointed One. The kingdom of God, which it was once the purpose of Christ to establish on earth, has now reached its consummation, and in it God will rule to all eternity

REVELATION

[XI, 16-18]

(16) And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, (17) saying,

We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast ; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. (18) And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy ¹ servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great ; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

through the Messiah, i. e. the Mediator of redemption, whom He has exalted to His right hand, in order to 16 give Him a share in His dominion. But the prophet knows from the former vision, whose voices those are which he hears. They are the voices of those representatives of the perfected congregation found in the twenty-four elders, who now fall upon their faces and 17 worship God with a psalm of thanksgiving. This psalm glorifies the Almighty God and Lord, who is as He was from eternity, whose coming, so often announced, is now being realized from the fact, that He now has actually assumed this great power, which indeed was at His disposal at every moment, but of which He had, as it were, emptied Himself, as long as He permitted Satan the opportunity of deceiving mankind upon earth. And thereby He has also entered upon His sovereignty. How it happened, that the Devil was 18 able to arouse the wrath of the Gentiles against God, and how this wrath broke forth, is to be made known to the prophet in the next vision. He, however, is already made aware that the wrath of the Gentiles has called forth the revelation of the wrath of God as a retribution upon them. But this retribution must extend not only over the living but over the dead also, i. e., over the enemies of God who have been slain in

(19) And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven ; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant ; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

the preparatory judgments of God, as also over the servants of God whom they slew. Accordingly the time has come when the former are to be judged and the latter to receive their reward. Among these the first mentioned are the servants of God in the narrow sense of the term, namely, the prophets, many of whom had suffered martyrdom in the time of the Seer ; and then the saints, who are described as those who feared the name of God and accordingly have served Him faithfully. This is done to emphasize the fact, that each one of them, without exception, great and small, is to receive his reward. But those who destroyed the earth, will receive the punishment due them by being destroyed eternally. In this way the vision closes with the psalm of thanksgiving asking for what the prayers of the saints had petitioned in the beginning.

- 19 Here the fourth vision begins. The heavenly temple of God opens before the eyes of the Seer. As the tabernacle, and after it the temple, was made by Moses after a model, which had been given him on the mount (Ex. xxv. 9 ; cf. Heb. viii. 5), so there is also a Holy of Holies in heaven, in which God sits enthroned above the ark of the covenant. It is from this throne of God that these symbols of divine wrath, with which we are already acquainted, proceed. But as the judgments of the second vision (iv. 5) appear intensified in the third by the addition of earthquakes (viii. 5), so here they are made yet greater by the addition of violent hail (cf. Ex. ix. 18-25), to indicate, that the final great judgment of God, which the former vision had not yet announced

XII And a great sign was seen in heaven : a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars ; (2) and she was with child ; and she cried out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be

(x. 3-4), is now at hand. But before the prophet can be instructed concerning this, he must first be informed as to what will bring it about. For it is the mission of the prophet not only to proclaim the future, but also to interpret the present, which prepares for the future (cf. i. 19). In this way the present vision is to teach him to understand the struggle of the present in its innermost nature through which the highest development of ungodliness is being prepared, on which the final judgment is to supervene. But to do this the vision must go back to an earlier period. It ushers in a remarkable phenomenon, which, in a form perceptible to the senses, indicates something above the senses, just as in the gospel of John the miracles of Jesus are constantly called signs of this kind. 1

A woman appears, enveloped in the light of the sun as in a garment, as God Himself appears in Ps. xiv. 2. Even from beneath she is covered with the light of the smaller luminary which governs the night (cf. Gen. i. 16). The crown of twelve stars shows to the Seer without a doubt, that it is the people of the twelve tribes, but not the actual Israel, which cannot appear in heaven in the presence of God, and which would not be a sign of something supernatural. It is rather the ideal of Israel, as Israel should be according to the counsel of God and was realized in the Old Testament kingdom of God, however imperfectly. The Messiah was to come forth from Israel, but the historical people as such could not produce Him. This could only be done by that Israel which was in harmony with the 2

delivered. (3) And there was seen another sign in heaven, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and upon his heads seven diadems. (4) And his tail swept the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that

will of God, because it was the people to whom the Messiah should bring redemption. From this view the entire history of Israel, with all of its experiences, through which God educated it for the coming of the Messiah, appears as a history of the travail in which the Messiah was to be born. And in the woman, who is to give birth to the Messiah, is the travail. The Devil does not appear here under a figure, which from the outset shows his character. Jesus has already declared that his first temptation was the lust for murder (John viii. 44), and accordingly he is here pictured as a fire-colored (i. e. red) dragon, who seeks to devour the child. His seven heads are the symbols of his sovereignty, which he exercises as the prince of this world, by which name Jesus often calls him (John xii. 31). His ten horns are the symbol of his omnipotent power, which of course is not equal to the omnipotence of God. The diadems signify the recognition of his sovereignty, because his power is enough to compel this recognition. The fact that these traits there are also hidden references to the instruments of the Devil, does not at first become apparent to the Seer. Now come the greatest signs of his triumph over him.

4 to God. We already know that the stars are the angels, and accordingly the large portion of the stars which his tail sweeps from the heavens are fallen angels, whom he has persuaded to be his followers. But as the Devil knows that the

to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child. (5) And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the ¹ nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. (6) And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

¹ Or, *Gentiles*.

is coming to put an end to his dominion, he prepares to devour the child of the sun-woman as soon as it is born. When the woman gave birth to a son, namely that Man, who, according to Ps. ii. 9, is at once characterized as the Messiah, he tried to do this in different ways, be- 5 ginning with the machinations of Herod and down to those of the leaders of the Jews who nailed Him to the cross. But finally the child was taken to heaven, in order there to share the throne of God. Thereby all devilish machinations, which sought to destroy the Messiah, were for all times made futile. The true 6 Israel, after it had given birth to the Messiah, is now the congregation of believers out of Israel, in whom the ideal of the true Israel is realized. This Israel, too, is delivered from the persecutions of Satan by flight to a place prepared by God, where they find safety and care in the times of suffering (cf. xi. 3) which begin with the conquest of Jerusalem. The writer has in mind the original Jewish Christian congregation which fled to Pella beyond the Jordan, before the capture of Jerusalem, and there was unmolested by any persecution.

But before the further attempts of the Devil to destroy the work of the Messiah can be described, as these attempts were made in the days of the Seer, it is necessary that the effect which the life's work of Christ has made upon him be delineated. Before this time he stood at the zenith of his power. This, according to Job. i. is given in the statement that he was then

(7) And there was war in heaven : Michael and his angels *going forth* to war with the dragon ; and the dragon warred and his angels ; (8) and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. (9) And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole ¹ world ; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. (10) And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying,

¹ Gr. *inhabited earth*.

still an inhabitant of heaven. Now the Seer is shown the victory over Satan through the life and death of
 7 Christ under the image of a war, which is begun in heaven between the archangel Michael (cf. Jude v. 9) as the leader of the hosts of the angels, together with his angels on the one hand, and the Dragon with his
 8 angels on the other. But the latter fails to gain the victory, and accordingly there is no longer any room for him in heaven. He is hurled down to earth together with his followers, i. e. is hurled from the height of his
 9 power (cf. Luke x. 18 ; John xii. 81). Now it becomes clear why the Devil, who is also called Satan, is pictured as a dragon, a monster like a serpent. For as the old serpent he already misled the first human beings in Paradise, just as he afterwards misled, and even now misleads, the whole world. Through the sinless life of Christ and through His death, which atoned for all sin, Satan for the first time has been conquered ; and this victory is now being joyfully celebrated in heaven. Now there is a deliverance for the believers, who have
 10 been cleansed of their sins through His death. Now there is a power which can conquer the Devil, as Christ gives the power to overcome him to those who are His. In the congregation of the believers the sovereignty of God has already been realized, which Jesus purposed to establish in the kingdom of God. But it is only the Messiah, because He has been elevated to the throne of God,

REVELATION

[XII, 11-12]

¹ Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ : for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. (11) And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their life even unto death. (12) Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that ² dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea : because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

¹ Or, *Now is the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom, become our God's, and the authority is become his Christ's.* ² Gr. *tabernacle.*

who has authority to appropriate the blessings of this victory. Henceforth the Devil cannot even bring charges against the pious, whom the inhabitants of heaven call their brethren, as he was able to do in the case of Job, and since that time constantly, because even those, whom he has not been able to mislead to Satanic sins, still committed all kinds of sins of weakness. Since he has been hurled out of heaven, he has been deprived of the possibility of coming before God with his accusations ; or, stated in plain language, the believers, 11 as we can already see by the results of their lives, have overcome Satan, i. e. have put to naught all attempts to mislead them, because the blood of the Lamb, which has made them free of sin and thereby delivered them from the accusations of Satan, has given them the joy and the power to begin a new life. Then too the word of God, which they possessed and which they have proclaimed to all the world as His testimony, has at all times showed them the way to resist these temptations. But they have remained faithful even to the death of martyrdom, because obedience to the word of God was dearer to them than their own life. For this reason 12 the hymn of praise calls to the heavens and to their inhabitants, the angels, to rejoice. To the earth and to the sea (i. e. the islands) it indeed can only cry out a

XII, 13-14] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

(13) And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child. (14) And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time,

Woe. For even if the Devil, through his being hurled from heaven upon earth has been deprived of his god-like sovereignty, he is nevertheless able now, more than ever, to pour out his wrath on this account upon the inhabitants of the earth, who have been delivered from his sovereignty. But he will do this all the more, because he knows, that he has only a short time, namely, that period of disaster which in xii. 6 is measured by days, and which are to bring upon the believers the last terrible sufferings (vii. 14).

- 18 The Seer now returns to what he already said in xii. 6 concerning the flight and the deliverance of the woman. For it was the Devil, who concluded from the fact that he was hurled out of heaven, that the child of the woman was his conqueror, and he on this account now pursues the woman in his wrath. The primitive Jewish Christian congregation, as we well know, was the first object of the persecution of the Christians which the Devil inaugurated. But already in Ex. xix. 4 it is said, that God had carried His people on eagle-wings; and this fact is
- 14 shown in these persecutions of the Christians. The woman herself receives two wings of that great eagle, with which she can flee to her place of refuge, where she, as was once the case with Israel, will be sustained in the desert during these troublous times, which here are described with the original Old Testament expression (Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7). This flight of the original congregation took place before the time of the writer, in whose days this period of misfortune begins. The further de-

REVELATION

[XII, 15-18]

and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. (15) And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. (16) And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. (17) And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus : and ¹ he stood upon the sand of the sea.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *stood*, &c., connecting the clause with what follows.

scription, according to which she thus escapes all the persecutions of the Devil, is based on the typical case of Israel, whom the waters of the Red Sea sought to devour 15 when they fled from Pharaoh. But this can be shown 16 in the case of the flight of the woman with eagle's wings only in this way, that the serpent casts out of its mouth a whole stream of water after her, in order to overwhelm and drown her therewith ; and further that this water is devoured by the earth so that it can do no harm to the woman. Thereupon the Devil becomes enraged 17 more than ever because his victim has escaped him. And as he is not able to hurt the first children of the woman, i. e. the believers out of Israel, he goes out in order to make war upon the other children, i. e. to persecute the Christians from among the Gentiles. For among the Gentiles too there were already those who fulfilled the commandments of God and clung in faith to the revelation made known in Jesus. These have, too, been born from the same mother who gave birth to the believers out of Israel, and are children of the New Testament people of God, in whose midst the Messiah has realized the ideal of the Old Testament people of God. Now we know that the wrath of the Gentiles against these (xi. 18) is caused by their Master, the Devil. But the Devil steps upon the sand on the shore.

XIII And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. (2) And the

of the sea, in order to look around for his helpers through whom he may be enabled to begin his persecutions of the believers from among the Gentiles. But the sea of which the Seer thinks is the Mediterranean; and as the Devil stands on the shore and looks westwards, it must be the Roman world power, which has its seat in that direction, from which he hopes to get his first and chief help in the first beast.

- 1 The prophet sees a beast coming up out of the sea. For there, far in the Mediterranean (or as the saying was at that time: upon the islands of the sea) was Rome, the metropolis of the world. As this beast was yet in the act of coming forth, he first sees its horns and then its heads. It has ten horns, as the four beasts in the vision of Daniel had together (cf. vii. 4-6). As these latter beasts represent the different world powers in their succession, the prophet knows, that the one he now sees is the last of all of them, and that it is the Roman world power which includes all the others. What the different horns and heads are in detail, is not to be revealed here but in the next vision. But the fact that the former are ornamented with diadems, indicates, as in the case in xii. 8, that it is the elevation of certain rulers to royal supremacy in later times which the prophet has in mind, and that this supremacy will be accepted by mankind. And the fact that these bear names of blasphemy, makes it clear, that the author is thinking of the occupants of the Roman imperial throne, since these appropriate to themselves the name of Augustus. This act the Christians regarded as blasphemous assumption, because the use of this name indicated that the Emperor laid claim to a wor-
- 2

beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion : and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority, (3) And *I saw* one of his heads as though it had been) ¹ smitten unto death, and his deathstroke was healed : and the

¹ Gr. *slain*.

ship similar to that rendered to God. The beast, accordingly, is the Roman world power, represented by the Roman Empire. For this reason the peculiarities of the three other beasts, which are characterized separately by Daniel, are here united in the one. For it is like the leopard, such as the third beast is ; it has the claws of a bear, as the second has ; it has the mouth of a lion, like the first. But to this beast the Devil has given its comprehensive power and a supernatural dominion, which showed itself in xii. 8 in its ten horns, and its seven heads, as also a full authority to use both of these at will. The Roman Empire accordingly is to be the instrument of which the Devil makes use to carry out his persecution of the Christians as planned in xii. 17. But why only now? In this connection the Seer becomes clear on the significance of his own ⁸ times. One of those heads he sees slain as for death, exactly as was the case with the Lamb in v. 6. Accordingly one of those bearers of the imperial power has died. Thereby this beast has been mortally wounded ; and this the prophet now sees is healed. Now we know exactly at what time John is writing the Apocalypse. Through the death of the last Emperor from the original imperial Julian family, namely Nero, it seemed as though the old imperial power had received its death-blow. In the times of the so-called Interregnum new Emperors were constantly trying to secure the throne, but not one could secure a permanent or generally recognized authority. Thereupon, by the fact that Vespasian was made Emperor and

XIII, 4-7] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

whole earth wondered after the beast; (4) and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they¹ worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? (5) and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority² to continue forty and two months. (6) And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that³ dwell in the heaven. (7) ⁴ And

¹ See marginal note on ch. 8. 9. ² Or, to do his works during. See Dan. 11. 28. ³ Gr. *tabernacle*. ⁴ Some ancient authorities omit *And it was given . . . overcome them*.

in an orderly manner was confirmed by the Senate, the mortal wound of the beast is healed and in the new imperial family of the Flavians the Roman Empire is restored in its old and firm power. This is the epoch-making fact in the days of the Seer, as he can see from the fact, that the entire world looks upon the beast with amazement. Since the majority of the inhabitants of the earth at bottom worship the Devil in their idols, they here adore the beast that has been selected to be his instrument, on account of its godlike and irresistible power. But to this beast, as is the case in Dan. vii. 8, 20, 25, a mouth is given which utters great blasphemies; but at the same time God has assigned to it only a certain time for its activity. This is the time of distress, which is to begin at once with the government of the heathen over Israel, and this is immediately impending (xi. 2), and, accordingly, for the Christians in heathen lands will also be a time of persecutions and sufferings. For that beast, the heads of which will bear the blasphemous name of Augustus, will not only blaspheme the name of the God and heaven, in which He dwells together with the angels, but it will also persecute and slay the saints, and will exercise supremacy over the world during the time allotted it, through which supremacy it is able to accom-

REVELATION

[XIII, 8-11]

it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. (8) And all that dwell on the earth shall ¹ worship him, *every one* whose name hath not been ² written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain. (9) If any man hath an ear, let him hear, (10) ³ If any man ⁴ is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the ⁵ patience and the faith of the saints.

(11) And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a

¹ See marginal note on ch. 3. 2. ² Or, *written in the book . . . slain from the foundation of the world.* ³ The Greek text in this verse is somewhat uncertain. ⁴ Or, *leadeth into captivity.* ⁵ Or, *steadfastness.*

plish these things wherever these saints are to be found among the peoples of the earth. But only those among the inhabitants of the earth will reverence it, whose 8 names are not found in the book of life, in which those are recorded whom the Lamb that was slain has destined for eternal life. These are not those whose names Christ has perchance erased from the book of life (ii. 5), because they were unworthy of this, but those whose names were never found there since the foundation of the world. The prophet commands that all who have 9 ears should hear. For he recalls the eternal law of 10 divine righteousness, which repays like with like, and accordingly will punish the death of His believers with the death of their persecutors. Upon this certainty rests the patience of the saints who have the firm assurance that their exalted Lord will in the end deliver them from all their afflictions by His judgments over His enemies.

The second beast, which the prophet himself later on 11 interprets as being pseudo-prophecy (xvi. 18), comes up out of the earth (in contrast to the Western sea v. 1), because heathen arts of magic and jugglery come from the East. By their oracles and miraculous signs they

XIII, 12-15] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

dragon. (12) And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to ¹ worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed. (13) And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. (14) And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast ; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived. (15) And it was given *unto*

¹ See marginal note on ch. 8. 9.

- formed an important support of the Roman world power. Its two lamblike horns of the beast are the picture of innocence, which garment it assumes (cf. Matt. vii. 15). However, as is seen from what it says, through its deception and trickery, as did the serpent in Paradise, it misleads mankind and brings them into misery, since these horns develop into a dragon. This beast precedes the first to prepare the way for it and induces the whole earth to render obeisance to the re-established
- 12 Roman Empire. Since false prophecy is also an instrument of the Devil, the latter gives it the power to perform great signs, even to imitate the miracle of Elias (cf.
- 13 1 Kings xviii. 38 ; 2 Kings i. 10, 12), by which signs true prophets also prove their claim (xi. 5). In this way the inhabitants of the earth are misled to prepare an image
- 14 of the beast, which naturally represents only the present occupant of the Roman throne. For this reason, the mortal wound with which the beast had so long been afflicted, but which is healed, is now described as a sword wound, because it was reported that the last of the Julian line had killed himself with the sword. In the present Emperor, the general recognition of whom the pseudo-prophecy is trying to establish, the Roman Em-
- 15 pire, as it were, has secured a new life. Now the Gentile jugglers breathe a breath of life into the image of

him to give breath to it, *even* to the image of the beast, ¹ that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not ² worship the image of the beast should be killed. (16) And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; (17) and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, *even* the name of the beast or the number of his name. (18) Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is ³ Six hundred and sixty and six.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *that even the image of the beast should speak: and he shall cause etc.* ² See marginal note on ch. 3. 9. ³ Some ancient authorities read *Six hundred and sixteen.*

this Emperor, so that it begins to speak, and in this way makes men believe that it is the image of a god. For it is an easy thing to make the masses believe, that all who do not worship this image will be put to death. A mark is agreed upon, whereby all classes and conditions of the people must show themselves before all the world 16 to be the adherents of the new imperial power, so that 17 those who do not do this may be excluded from all business and trade. As such a sign the name of the beast or the number indicated by its name is selected. It was a favorite notion at that time to add together the numerical values of the different letters that made up a word and in this way reproduce the name by such enigmatical figures. In this way the prophet too gives to the 18 first beast of which he spoke a name, and interprets it enigmatically by the number 666, each letter in which combination is reaching out after the sacred number of seven, which is always attributed to that which is divine, but which these numbers never attain. In this connection the interpreter could show his wisdom, if he had shrewdness enough, to figure out on the basis of this number what the name of the beast is. For this there would be no need of a higher inspiration, since it is a

XIV And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father,

human number, i. e. a number such as every man makes use of and which accordingly can be distributed according to the different numerical values of the letters in a name. The interpreters have tried so far in vain to solve this numerical enigma, because they have always been searching for the name of a Roman emperor, although the Apostle unequivocally states, that he means the name of the beast as the designation of the imperial power that is represented in the present Emperor. This Empire he wishes to describe in an enigmatical manner by this name as striving for divine power, supremacy and honor. That it is no longer possible for us with anything like a certainty to solve the difficulty, is clear.

- 1 If the Seer is to learn to understand his age as that of conflict such as the Devil and his two helpers are carrying on, he must learn now also who the enemy is against whom the Devil is going to war. This is none other than the Lamb Himself with His followers. But the picture of the struggle (cf. xi. 7 ; xii. 7) is borrowed from the Old Testament congregation, which is constantly used as the image of that of the New Testament. The ancient Israelites were often compelled to defend their independence in the struggle against the surrounding heathen peoples. Accordingly the Lamb is described as standing upon Mount Zion, which forms the sacred center of the Old Testament congregation, and its faithful followers are described as coming from the Twelve-tribes nation, just as this is done in vii. 4. Just as those who worship the beast carry the name of the beast on their foreheads, thus the worshippers of the

REVELATION

[XIV, 2-4]

written on their foreheads. (2) And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard *was as the voice* of harpers harping with their harps: (3) and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, *even* they that had been purchased out of the earth. (4) These are they that

Lamb bear the name of Christ. He, however, is of importance for them only in so far as He is the Son of God, so that as a matter of necessity His name is joined to that of His Father. For they have only become servants of God by having become servants of Christ. 2 Now there is heard from heaven a sound like that of a battle hymn, which is to encourage this army of the Lamb to fight bravely. This hymn loudly resounds like the roaring of the sea or of thunder; but at the same time it is also gentle and lovely, like the strains of a harp. For above, where the hosts of the 8 angels surround the throne of God as also the living creatures and the elders, as the Seer had seen in the second vision, a new hymn is sung which none can learn to sing except the one hundred and forty-four thousand. For this is the song of redemption which they themselves have experienced, because they have been bought free by the blood of the Lamb to become the possession of God and they are thereby for all times separated from the inhabitants of the earth. These are they who, as the song of the angels lauds them truly, 4 have not polluted their virgin purity by contamination with the sin of the Gentiles, i. e. fornication. They are those who are ready to follow the Lamb everywhere in faithful obedience, wherever it leads them, and be this even to the death of martyrdom. They are those who, having been bought free from all servitude of men and

XIV, 5-7] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. (5) And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish.

(6) And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having ¹eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that ²dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; (7) and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory: for the hour of his judgment is come: and ³worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

¹ Or, an eternal gospel.

² Gr. sit.

³ See marginal note on ch. 3. 2.

sin, are now the first-fruits consecrated to God, and belong to Him alone and to the Lamb. For they are without a blemish, as everything must be which is consecrated to
 5 God, so that even in their mouths nothing is to be found of that which the Lord has declared to be the mark of the murderer from beginning (John viii. 44), namely, lies. Naturally, it is not possible now to describe the battle itself that takes place between the Satanic powers and the army of Christ, especially as we know, that it is first to end with the defeat of the believers in the death of martyrdom (xiii. 7), which of course is at the same time their most glorious victory. Instead of this, new revelations now follow in this vision, which are to serve the purpose of strengthening the congregation in this struggle.

6 A different angel from those who are singing the new hymn comes forth, who, as was the case with the eagle, viii. 13, flies in the height of heaven, because his message is to be heard by all who dwell anywhere upon the earth. It is the old eternal message of joy which he proclaims, namely that salvation has been prepared
 7 for all mankind in Christ. But, as was the case with Jesus and the Apostles, this message is preceded by the call for repentance. Whoever does not fear God nor

(8) And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

(9) And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with

give Him all honor does not desire redemption and cannot attain it; and yet the hour of judgment has come, which is to decide salvation and condemnation. For the judgment must come when wickedness has attained its highest development, and this is found in the struggle that is begun by Satan against the Lamb. But the first prerequisite for repentance on the part of the heathens is of course this, that they at once cease to worship the Devil and worship the Creator of the whole world. How near the judgment is at hand, is announced by a second angel, who also does not belong 8 to the heavenly choir, and who follows the first. For he sees already the great city destroyed, which is the source of all the heathen abomination; and this can only be the beginning of the judgment. What great city this is, and what its connection is with the beast of chapter xiii. is to be revealed to the prophet in the next vision. For the present it is called by the name of that metropolis from which in former times the armies went forth who destroyed the Old Testament people of God, namely, Babylon on the Euphrates, to which the prophets of Israel had with similar words already prophesied destruction, and which they already in spirit saw fulfilled (Is. xxi. 9). We indeed know that it was Rome, the metropolis of the world, which, with all the abomination of its sins, especially through fornication, which here had its headquarters, seduced all the Gentiles that had any dealings there into the same sins, by arousing the lust for such sins, just as the blood is excited by warm wine. The third angel, however, who is closely con- 9

XIV, 10-11] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

a great voice, if any man ¹worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his head, (10) he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is ²prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: (11) and the smoke of their torment goeth up ³for ever and ever; and they have

¹ See marginal note on ch. 8. 9. ² Gr. *mingled*. ³ Gr. *unto ages of ages*.

- nected with the other two, announces that the great judgment which has already begun in the case of Babylon will also visit with divine justice all the worshippers of the Roman Emperor, who, as we know from xiii. 15, through the image made of him, had become the object of divine adoration, as also all those will suffer, who, after the manner described in xiii. 16, have publicly proclaimed themselves the followers of the blasphemous imperial rule. Now God will give to them a cup of heated wine, which will not, as was
- 10 usually the case, be mixed with water, but which is mixed, as the suggestive expression here states, by not being mixed at all, and hence retains its full strength. But in this cup there is not offered the debauchery that excites sensual passion, as was done in the cup of the great Babylon, but a cup that contains the divine wrath on account of their idolatry. Just as in former times fire and brimstone rained down upon Sodom as a divine judgment, thus this judgment will now come over them in the presence of the holy angels, who, just as if they were the associates in the judgment of the Lamb, will testify, that these have not been willing to be converted to Christ. The smoke, too, in which it was thought that the fire of the destroyed city of sin
- 11 could then yet be seen, will also testify of the endless torment which the wrath of God inflicts upon them. In the certainty that this judgment of God will come the patience of the saints has its seat, who now must suffer

REVELATION

[XIV, 12-14]

no rest day and night, they that ¹worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name. (12) Here is the ²patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

(13) And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die ³in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.

(14) And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud *I saw* one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a

¹ See marginal note on ch. 3. 9.

² Or, *steadfastness*.

³ Or, *in the Lord*. From henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit.

amid the persecutions of those who worship the beast 12
and their followers, and who have notwithstanding,
this, adhered to their trust in Jesus and His promises.
To this end they are strengthened by the voice from
heaven, which commands the Apostle to write down 13
the blessedness of those who died in the faith of the
exalted Lord. Because now, as the judgment upon the
worshippers of the beast has begun, the reward of the
faithful worshippers of Christ is also to come. It is
the voice of Christ, which from the outset had com-
manded the Seer to write down everything that he
would see and hear (i. 19). But the prophetic Spirit
confirms what he has heard by announcing, that it is
determined, that they are to rest from all their labors,
which the struggle with Satan and his helpers has
caused them. For everything that they have done in
the faith in their Lord in order to offer resistance in
their struggle, goes with them when they die, in order
to bring about their being declared just and being
rewarded in the judgment of God.

This vision also leads to the final judgment, which in
xiv. 7 is declared to be immediately impending. But
the way in which this judgment is to be carried out is
shown to the Seer for the present only in similitudes.
He who sits upon a cloud which is saturated with 14

XIV, 15-18] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. (15) And another angel came out from the ¹ temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ² ripe. (16) And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

(17) And another angel came out from the ¹ temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. (18) And another

¹ Or, *sanctuary*.

² Gr. *become dry*.

divine glory (cf. Matt. xvii. 5), and who, according to Daniel, comes in the form of a Son of man (cf. i. 13), is the Messiah. The crown of victory upon His brow shows, that He has been victorious in the battle, upon which He entered in xiv. i, 4, and has conquered His enemies. The sharp sickle shows that He now is ready
15 for a merciless judgment. Then a different angel than those who only announced the judgment, brings to him a message from the temple, and accordingly from God Himself, to the effect, that the hour of the harvest is at hand, because the earth is more than ripe for the judgment, for the grain in the field has already begun to wither. God has reserved for Himself alone the determination of the hour and the day of the judgment, and this can only come, when the sins upon earth have attained their highest culmination. All that is neces-
16 sary is for Christ to throw the sickle down upon the earth, and this sickle itself does the harvesting, which is only symbolical of the judgment. A different picture of the judgment is found in the making of wine. The preparation for this is left to another angel, who also
17 has a sharp sickle. Here, at the end of the vision, it is purposely stated, that he comes forth from the heavenly temple, which in the beginning of the vision (xi. 19) had been opened before the eyes of the prophet. Accordingly he sees also the sacrificial altar, with its eternal fire,
18 that is the symbol of the wrath of God. In this case it

REVELATION

[XV, 1

angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire ; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth ; for her grapes are fully ripe. (19) And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the ¹vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great *winepress*, of the wrath of God. (20) And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

XV And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having seven plagues, *which are the last*, for in them is finished the wrath of God.

¹ Gr. *vine*.

is only the angel, who, just as all the elements have their special angels so that they can serve God with them, has power also over this fire, and he brings to the angel with the sickle the message, that the harvest is to begin, because the grapes on the vine of the earth are fully ripe, as the world is for the judgment. There- 19
upon the angel casts his sickle upon the earth, which again of itself cuts the grapes and throws them into the divine winepress, with the pressing of which the wine-making, i. e. the judgment, begins. Since the juice of the 20
grape flows from the press red as blood, this judgment in the vision is transformed into the picture of a great battle, which takes place outside of the city, which, according to v. 8, has already been destroyed, and in which the blood flows in such streams that the horses wade in it one thousand and six hundred furlongs, and the blood reaches to their bridles. The number results from multiplying the world number by itself, and then also by a hundred, and is naturally only the symbol showing how all-comprehensive the final judgment of the Messiah is.

The fifth vision of the angels with the bowl has also a special superscription, in which it is said that the 1

(2) And I saw as it were a ¹sea of glass mingled with fire ; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing ²by the ¹sea of glass, having harps of God. (3) And they sing the song of Moses the ³servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Al-

¹ Or, *glassy sea*. ² Or, *upon*. ³ Gr. *bondservant*.

prophet saw a great and wonderful sign in the heavens, namely, seven angels. These are intended to indicate that the seven last plagues, which are inflicted through them, and in which the fire of God's wrath is completed, are now to be revealed to the Seer. These are not the last judgment, but only a series of preparatory judgments, like those of the seven trumpets in the third vision. But they are the last blows which will be inflicted upon the Gentile world, in order for the last time to admonish them to repent before the final judgment itself comes. He again sees the heavenly firmament, which extends like a sea of glass
 2 before the throne of God (cf. iv. 6), but is now reddened by the fire of God's wrath, whose judgments are impending. Upon this stand the victors, who have come forth out of the battle with the beast as conquerors, and have not suffered themselves to be misled to worship its image or to pay obeisance to its name. These, who are spared by the last seven plagues as they had been by the preceding, have harps in their hands, such as God alone can give, in order to accompany the hymn of praise, which they begin as it were as an introduction
 3 to the following judgment. This hymn is called the song of Moses and the Lamb, in order to emphasize the fact, that the divine glory, which is revealed in the typical redemption effected through Moses' mediation is exactly the same as that which has been revealed through Christ. At all times the works of Almighty God are

REVELATION

[XV, 4-8

mighty ; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ¹ages. (4) Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy ; for all the nations shall come and ²worship before thee ; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

(5) And after these things I saw, and the ³temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened : (6) and there came out from the ³temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed ⁴with *precious* stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles. (7) And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth ⁵for ever and ever. (8) And the ³temple was filled with smoke from

¹ Many ancient authorities read *nations*. Jer. 10. 7. ² See marginal note on ch. 8. 9. ³ Or, *sanctuary*. ⁴ Many ancient authorities read *in linen*, ch. 19. 8. ⁵ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages*.

great and wonderful ; His providence is just and truly divine, even when He exercises His supremacy over the Gentiles, who do not yet know Him. But these must 4 first learn to know Him, to fear Him, to glorify His name, and to worship Him as the Holy One, when in the coming judgments His just ordinances have become manifest. But among all the persecutions through the world, the congregation of the believers does not give up the hope, that the heathens will eventually be converted. Only at 5 this stage the vision announced in v. 1 appears, in which the heavenly temple is again open to the view of the Seer, as this temple was the original image of the tabernacle. Only at this stage these angels actually step out in 6 priestly raiment (cf. 1-13), with a shining white garment, which is already girded high up by a golden girdle, because they are to exercise the functions of their office. 7 One of those very four living creatures, who will certainly have the most to suffer through the afflictions of this fire of wrath, in which God shows Himself to be the eternally Living One, hands them the golden bowl from the sanctuary for this purpose. But then God Himself appears in His temple. As under other circumstances 8

the glory of God, and from his power ; and none was able to enter into the ¹temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

XVI And I heard a great voice out of the ¹temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

(2) And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth ; and ²it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that ³worshipped his image.

(3) And the second poured out his bowl into the sea ; and ²it became blood as of a dead man ; and every ⁴living soul died, *even* the things that were in the sea.

¹ Or, *sanctuary*.
⁴ Gr. *soul of life*.

² Or, *there came*.

³ See marginal note on ch. 8. 9.

His glory and omnipotence, the brilliancy of which man cannot see, appear in a cloud, thus here they appear in the smoke, which proceeds from the fire of His wrath and fills the temple, so that nobody can come near, examples of which occur in Ex. xl. 34, 35, or 1 Kings xiii. 10, 11, until His wrath breaks forth in the impending final blows of His judgment. But the

- 1 seven angels now receive the command from the sanctuary to inflict these blows, which work is here represented by the symbolical action consisting of the pouring out of the bowls, which are filled with the fire of God's wrath, upon the earth.
- 2 Here again we have only a symbolical representation of this divine judgment, which is again based on the typical character of the Egyptian plagues. In this way the grievous sore, which afflicts those who worship and follow the beast, is like the similar affliction of the Egyptians in Ex. ix. 9, 10. The other plague, which is modeled after the same precedent and is described in
- 3 Ex. viii. 8, appears here in an awfully exaggerated form. The whole sea is converted into blood, and that into scattered blood like that of a dead man, so that all living

REVELATION

[XVI, 4-10]

(4) And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters ; ¹and ²it became blood. (5) And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus ³judge : (6) for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink : they are worthy. (7) And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

(8) And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun ; and it was given unto ⁴it to scorch men with fire. (9) And men were scorched with great heat : and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues ; and they repented not to give him glory.

(10) And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast ; and his kingdom was darkened ; and they gnawed

¹ Some ancient authorities read and they became.

² Or, there came.

³ Or, judge. Because they . . . prophets, thou hast given them blood to drink.

⁴ Or, him.

creatures in the sea die. In the same way the plague of Ex. viii. 10-12 is intensified, so that all the rivers and fountains of water are changed into blood and cannot 4 be drunk. Here the angel himself, whose dominion is thereby curtailed, must acknowledge, that this judgment is just, since those, who have shed the blood of 5 the saints and of the prophets, are only receiving like 6 for like, when the blood of the latter is given them to 7 drink, and this fact the altar, which was the witness of the shedding of their blood, can only confirm. In connection with the next two plagues it is especially emphasized, that these too, the purpose of which was to 8 lead people to repentance, on the whole did not attain 9 their purpose. Although the bowl which is poured out over the sun gives it the power to torture men by the intensity of its heat, these blaspheme the name of God, who has the power of inflicting such plagues upon them, and they do not give Him honor by a change of their hearts. Although the bowl which is poured out over the residence of the beast inflicts a dense darkness 10

XVI, 11-14] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

their tongues for pain, (11) and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works.

(12) And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising. (13) And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: (14) for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth ¹unto the kings of the whole ²world, to gather

¹ Or, upon.

² Gr. *inhabited earth*.

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- 11 upon his entire country, as was the case in Ex. x. 22, but is so terrible, that men bite their tongues on account of pain caused by these plagues, yet these are thereby only induced to blaspheme, instead of turning from their sinful deeds by a change of heart.
- 12 After the same model that is used in ix. 14, the Euphrates is regarded as the river over which the majority of the enemies of the kingdom of God in Israel come. The sixth bowl causes this river to dry up, in order to prepare the way for the kings of the Orient, so that they too, who live beyond the limits of the Roman Empire, can take part in this final onslaught on the congregation of God. For the final judgment, which includes the whole world, can only take place when the sins of the *entire* world have reached their highest development. In this way this judgment prepares directly for the final judgment. For just as soon as these kings
- 13 appear on the scene of the last contest, they are led out
- 14 to participate in the battle by the Devil and the beast which represents the Roman empire, and by the second beast, which is here expressly described to be pseudo-prophecy. This is figuratively represented in this way, that three unclean, froglike, demoniacal spirits through their devilish and deceptive miraculous signs, mislead

REVELATION

[XVI, 15-18]

them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. (15) (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) (16) And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew ¹ Har-Magedon.

(17) And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the ² temple, from the throne, saying, It is done: (18) and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such

¹ Or, *Ar-Magedon*.

² Or, *sanctuary*.

the kings of the whole earth to assemble for this contest, the outcome of which is to bring the final judgment of God upon them. But their devilish and deceptive arts endanger the believers also. For this reason 15 the prophet recalls the fact, that the Lord has promised to come like a thief in the night, when we least expect Him (Matt. xxiv. 43); and he therefore declares those blessed, who through the watchfulness demanded by Jesus, have preserved the unspotted garment of righteousness notwithstanding all this deception, and who will not eventually appear before Him naked, so that everybody can see their shame. But the kings of the 16 entire world will be gathered at that place, which the prophet, as in the manner of his typical language, designates as the hill of Megiddo, because in former years at Megiddo a similar decisive battle took place between the people of God and their enemies (cf. Judg. v. 19).

The seventh bowl is poured out into the air, in which 17 then the terrible storms of the last preparatory divine judgment are prepared. For that the pouring out of the seventh bowl signifies this, is stated by a voice, which resounds from the heavenly temple and from the throne of God above the Cherubim. This is accordingly the voice of God Himself, declaring that now the work, which had been commanded to the seven angels (xvi. 1), is completed. Thereupon the terrible storm breaks 18

XVI, 19-21] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

as was not since ¹there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty. (19) And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the ²nations fell : and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. (20) and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. (21) And great hail, *every stone* about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men : and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *there was a man*.

² Or, *Gentiles*.

- loose accompanied by earthquakes, such as never before occurred, as long as men have lived upon the earth. Now, as was already told the prophet in xi. 18, the great city of Jerusalem is visited by the final judgment of God,
- 19 which is known to be coming at the end of the period of suffering consisting of three and a half years. This will destroy at least a part of the city, by dividing it into three parts, so that a large portion of the inhabitants will be destroyed. But now this judgment is extended also over the cities of the heathens, and especially over the great Babylon, as was announced already in xiv. 8. Up to now it seemed as though God had forgotten to punish the terrible abomination of its sins : but now He gives it to drink the cup full of the fire of His wrath. The city is not only partially destroyed, but
- 20 entirely, since the islands, upon which it stands (cf. on xiii. 1), disappear together with the hills upon which it is built. What is meant by this is at once told to the prophet. With this a judgment of God falls upon the inhabitants of this city, such as was already pictured in xi. 19, in the hail, which plague is found too among
- 21 those of Egypt. But in this case the hailstones are hundreds of pounds in weight, as heavy as the largest stones that are hurled by the machines of war. But this terrible plague of hail also is fruitless, because

XVII And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; (2) with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth

men only blaspheme God on account of it. They do not think of repentance and conversion, since it is too late for this in view of this sign immediately preceding the final judgment. For the judgment over Babylon is the beginning of the end. For that reason the prophet yet continues to contemplate the case of Babylon, so that the full significance of this event may be shown and interpreted to him.

One of the seven angels with bowls comes to the 1 Apostle and speaks to him. In the following it becomes clear, that the purpose is to explain more fully what had been said concerning the seven plagues that afflicted the great Babylon (xvi. 19, 20). For this angel offers to show him the judgment concerning the great harlot, who according to xiv. 8, can be nothing else than Babylon, i. e. a great city which, just as the Old Testament Babylon was situated on the Euphrates (Jer. ii. 13), was built on the islands of the Mediterranean (cf. xvi. 20), and accordingly must be Rome.

For it is said of this city, that the kings of the earth 2 have committed fornication with her and that all the inhabitants of the earth have become drunken by the wine of her fornication. For this reason, in xvi. 19, the threat is made that the city too is to drink of a heated wine, which in this case is to be that of the divine wrath. For just as surely as this peculiar picture of the abomination of her sins is based on the knowledge of the terrible sins of fornication which prevailed in Rome and which led both kings and people by committing the

XVII, 3-4] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. (3) And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast,¹ full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. (4) And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and² decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her

¹ Or, names of full of blasphemy.

² Gr. gilded.

same sin to enkindle their lusts to the utmost degree, nevertheless the prophet, after the manner of the Old Testament, has here in mind that idolatry, which these kings and nations have committed with the metropolis of the world as the seat of Roman imperial power. But as yet the Seer does not know the significance of this 8 harlot. For he is first carried away into a desert. He accordingly already knows, that what he will see here has become entirely a desert. Now he sees a woman, in magnificent raiment which stands in most pronounced contrast to this sad fate. It evidently is this harlot, whose judgment he is to behold. But the most important thing is the beast upon which she rides. The mere fact that it is covered with scarlet cloth shows that it is the Roman Empire, upon which the woman's entire glory rests and by which it is maintained. But as was the case with the beast which the prophet saw in chap. xiii., it is full of the names of blasphemy, because the different occupants of the imperial throne had all borne the blasphemous name of Augustus. Further, it has seven heads and ten horns, as many as the four beasts in the vision of Daniel had; because all the power and the glory of the kingdoms which Daniel saw are 4 combined in this one beast. But the woman herself too appears in royal splendor with purple and scarlet, decorated with all the rich ornaments of the world, because the capital city, in which the Empire had its headquarters, shares in the glory of the Empire's sovereignty and has been built up in magnificent splendor by it.

REVELATION

[XVII, 5-8]

hand a golden cup full of abominations, ¹even the unclean things of her fornication, (5) and upon her forehead a name written, ²MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (6) And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the ³martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder. (7) And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. (8) The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out

¹ Or, *and of the unclean things.*
² Or, *witnesses.* See ch. 2. 18.

³ Or, *a mystery, Babylon the Great.*

But what characterizes the harlot is the cup filled with idolatrous abomination and with the filth of her abomination. The Greek expression here finely indicates, that the gratification of the sensual lusts of man found in this cup allures mankind and misleads them to all kinds of idolatry. These people flock from all parts of the world to Rome and their sin reaches its acme in the deification of the Emperors. The woman openly carries her name on her forehead. It is the great Babylon, 5 which name mysteriously points to the fact, that Rome is the arch-enemy of the Kingdom of God, as Babylon was in the Old Covenant. And as such the woman at once shows herself by the fact, that she is still drunk with the blood of the saints and of the witnesses of Jesus. For the Seer yet remembers keenly the persecutions of the reign of Nero, with which the capital city had been polluted, and also the martyr death of Paul and of Peter in that city. But while the Seer is yet looking at this phenomenon without understanding it, the angel offers to explain to him the mysterious significance of the woman and of the beast, upon which her whole glory rests. This, however, he again does in enigmatical words; but what follows shows, that the Seer 7 has perfectly understood them. The beast is the im-

of the abyss,¹ and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, *they* whose name hath not been written² in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and

¹ Some ancient authorities read *and he goeth*.

² Gr. *on*.

perial power that has its headquarters in the metropolis of the world, and this empire is the representative of the hostility to the Christians. Such it was when in those terrible days of Nero it gave the blood of the Christians to the woman to drink. Such it is not now, as the new Emperor had not yet shown any hostility to Christianity. But such it will again be, when one of the occupants of the throne will ascend, as it were out of the abyss of hell, and will rage against the congregation with a Satanic hatred of Christ, but who will then *at once* be destroyed. Then the world will be seized with a general consternation, such as seized it when the Empire was revived again by the present emperor (xiii. 7), and when in this way the real hostility of the beast to Christ has been made manifest. True, only those shall be amazed whose names have never stood in the book of life (cf. xiii. 8). For the believers know full well, what this beast, which was and is not but which will be, signified.

Here the Apostle clearly distinguishes between the revelation of God which has been imparted to him in the vision, and the application of the same to the circumstances of his times. To him has been revealed the destruction of Rome in the polluted abomination of its sins and its idolatry. To him has been revealed the fact, that the Roman Empire, which, then already under Nero, had been guilty of a bloody persecution of the Christians, and which, although at the time when the Seer writes things do not look that way, will manifest its hostility to Christ more than ever. He consid-

REVELATION

[XVII, 9-10]

¹ shall come. (9) Here is the ² mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth : (10) and ³ they are seven kings ; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come ; and when he cometh, he must con-

¹ Gr. *shall be present.*

² Or, *meaning.*

³ Or, *they are.*

ers it the duty of him who has true wisdom, to attain 9
to the understanding of such revelations by interpreting them in their relation to his times. This application to the age is nothing less than an attempt to interpret the signs of the times, concerning which Jesus had already instructed His disciples. But the prophet can attempt it only on the presupposition which he shares with Jesus and the whole apostolic age, namely, that, according to the prediction of the Old Testament, that generation which will live to see the coming of the Messiah will also witness the final consummation, and that, accordingly, the final consummation of wickedness and the judgment is immediately impending. On the basis of this presupposition he sees in the seven heads of the beast, first of all, a reference to the seven hills upon which Rome was built ; and, secondly, a reference to the fact, that according to the counsel of God, the Roman Empire, which has its headquarters in this city, is destined to have only seven rulers. But five of 10
these have already passed away, namely, the five emperors of the Julian family (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero.) The emperor who is on the throne at present is the one in whom the family of the Flavians had re-established the empire (Vespasian). He will soon be followed by his older son (Titus), who, however, according to God's counsel, can remain only a short time, because the end is near. With this the divinely-ordained series of Roman emperors is closed. But a younger son of the present emperor is still living (Domitian), who at that time had already proved

XVII, 11-14] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

tinue a little while. (11) And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven ; and he goeth into perdition. (12) And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet ; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. (13) These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast. (14) These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings ; and they *also shall overcome* that are with him,

-
- his prowess in war, but of whom, to judge from his youthful excesses, only the worst could be expected.
- 11 When this son will eventually follow as the eighth on the throne, he will be a ruler not by the grace of God, but by the favor of the Devil, and in him, who alone is yet a descendant from one of the seven, the hostility of the beast to God and to Christ will be personified. But when in him wickedness has attained its highest development, he will also at once be cast into hell, as was shown by the beast which was and is not but again shall be. But how is this child of destruction to secure the sovereignty ? This, too, the Seer sees indicated by the ten horns of the beast he has seen. These are the governors of the Roman provinces, who by a revolution against this divinely-appointed seventh emperor, make themselves independent and
- 13 assume royal dignity. But this is only for a short
- 14 time. For having suddenly come to an agreement, they will transfer their power and dignity to that eighth emperor, in whom the whole essence of the beast is personified, in order to begin with him the great persecution of the Christians, in which the hostility of the enemies of God attains its highest development. In this struggle with the ruler who has been elevated to the sovereignty of the world, naturally only Christ can conquer with His faithful ones, whom He has

REVELATION

[XVII, 15-18]

called and chosen and faithful. (15) And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. (16) And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. (17) For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished. (18) And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which ¹ reigneth over the kings of the earth.

¹ Gr. *hath a kingdom*.

selected to be His tried disciples. But, before this takes place, the fate of Rome, which the angel has pointed out, must be decided. For the waters upon 15 which it is situated (cf. v. i.) ; point, according to an old prophetic picture (cf. Is. viii. 7 ; Jer. xlvii. 2), to the nations of the world, over which the world supremacy of Rome prevails. How, now, is this destruction to take place? This the Apostle again finds indicated by the ten horns. As the governors of the provinces 16 make themselves independent, this is done out of hostility to the capital city, which still clings to the seventh emperor, who has his seat in it. And when, in accordance with the divine counsel, their authority is so suddenly and unanimously transferred to the eighth emperor, in whom the character of the beast is incorporated, this is done in order, under his leadership, to conquer the capital city and to plunder it, and to slay the inhabitants and to burn the city itself. Then the words of God will be fulfilled which were spoken in the vision to him concerning the judgment on Babylon, which has now become a desert, as also the words concerning the beginning of the last great persecution of the Christians. In this way, then, is to be destroyed Rome, which the angel had shown to him as 17

XVIII, 1-3] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

XVIII After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. (2) And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a ¹hold of every unclean spirit, and a ¹hold of every unclean and hateful bird. (3) For ²by ³the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her ⁴wantonness.

¹ Or, prison. ² Some authorities read of the wine . . . have drunk.
³ Some ancient authorities omit the wine of. ⁴ Or, luxury.

the mistress of the world. Concerning this chief subject of this vision there is yet much to be added.

The fall of Rome as a judgment of God is again
1 pictured to the prophet. An angel of the higher order appears, whose power, which has been given him, is so great, that the brilliancy of his glory lightens up the whole earth; for all mankind is to pay attention to him. For this reason he, with a profound voice pro-
2 claims the fall of Babylon, as is done in xiv. 8; but here the statement is added, that the city has become a total desert and wilderness. These latter were usually regarded as the dwelling-places of demons, who, however, lived there by compulsion, because as unclean spirits they would rather search for human beings and take possession of these. In addition, all kinds of unclean and hideous winged creatures live there, such as are usually found in old ruins. This angel already reveals the reason for this judgment of God, pointing, with a picture that has already been em-
3 ployed frequently, to the fact that the city offers the hot wine of sexual indulgence to the people to drink, and that she permitted herself to become the object of the lascivious lusts of the kings of the earth. Its effeminacy has become so great that merchants are enriched thereby, since the city required all the luxuries

REVELATION

[XVIII, 4-7]

(4) And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: (5) for her sins ¹ have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. (6) Render unto her even as she rendered, and double *unto her* the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. (7) How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed ² wanton, so

¹ Or. *clave together*.

² Or, *luxurious*.

of the world to gratify her desires. In an entirely different way the voice of Christ Himself is also heard from heaven. For it can only be He who commands His people, that is, the congregation, to depart from the city which is destined for destruction, just as He had on a former occasion directed His disciples to flee from the judgment upon Israel. (Matt. xxiv. 16; (cf. Jer. li. 45). If they remained, then they would, intentionally or unintentionally, become partakers of its sins, and would therefore also be afflicted by the coming plagues. These plagues must come. For their sins have been rolled together like a ball which reaches up to heaven and which challenges God to visit them with His just judgment. In an expression which purposely is made sharp, those who are to execute the judgment are directed to repay the city exactly with what it has done to others; or, rather, because its works are so terrible, to measure out for it a punishment doubly so great, so that in the cup, which the city has filled with its wickedness, a double punishment is given to it to drink. Because of the haughtiness of the city, which boasts of being a queen who does not lack a royal husband, and who accordingly will never live to see misfortune, and because of the voluptuousness of which the city has been guilty, it is now to taste the opposite, namely, torment and lamentations. For on a single day the merited plagues will

XVIII, 8-18] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

much give her of torment and mourning : for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. (8) Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine ; and she shall be utterly burned with fire ; for strong is ¹ the Lord God who judged her. (9) And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived ² wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, (10) standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city ! for in one hour is thy judgment come. (11) And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their ³ merchandise any more ; (12) ³ merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet ; and all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of the most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble ; (13) and cinnamon, and ⁴ spice, and

¹ Some ancient authorities omit the Lord.
² Gr. *cargo*.

⁴ Gr. *amomum*.

³ Or, *luxuriously*.

8 afflict the city, namely. death and lamentation and famine, because God, who has pronounced the judgment, is strong and powerful enough to execute the judgment also.

Now comes a description of the impression made by
 9 this judgment upon the inhabitants of the earth. First the kings, whom the city had misled into idolatry and debauchery, will weep and lament over it when they see the ascending smoke of the fire that is consuming it. They will remain far away from it on account
 10 of fear of being caught in its torment, because the judgment of God has so suddenly come over the great
 11 and powerful city. The merchants do the same thing, because the world's metropolis alone purchased so many shiploads of their goods, that after its destruction they fear they will have no further market for their
 12 wares. Now the precious things are enumerated at
 13 length which had been brought there, down to the slaves whom they sold. Through an old mistake in the text,

REVELATION

[XVIII, 14-19]

incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and *merchandise* of horses and chariots and ¹slaves; and ²souls of men. (14) And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and *men* shall find them no more at all. (15) The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; (16) saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and ³decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! (17) for in one hour so great riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as ⁴gain their living by sea, stood afar off, (18) and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city? (19) And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were

¹ Gr. *bodies*. Gen. 36. 6 (Sept.).

² Or, *lives*.

³ Gr. *gilded*.

⁴ Gr. *work the sea*.

the cause of which we can no longer discover with a certainty, v. 14. is inserted here, the proper place of 14 which we will yet learn to know. For this verse evidently destroys the connection with what follows, in which it is described how the merchants, who deal with their goods in the city and had enriched themselves, stand at a distance from the city and lament its destruction for the same reason which the kings had, 15 since this city was once so richly decorated, as we heard in xvii. 4. and its riches have now suddenly been destroyed. Finally the address is changed into a 17 description of that which the prophet in spirit already 18 sees fulfilled, namely, that all who have anything to do with navigation stand at a distance, and that they, seeing the smoke of the fire consuming the city, cried out, that nobody can be compared with the city in its 19 greatness, but also in its fate, with which it is now afflicted. As a sign of their sorrow they throw dust

XVIII, 20-21] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

made rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. (20) Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her.

(21) And ¹a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying. Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be

¹ Gr. *one*.

upon their heads and lament concerning the great city in which they all have become rich, because the precious goods which they brought on their ships were sold there at high prices, and now everything has been destroyed with one blow. Of course the very opposite impression is made in heaven and upon the believers
20 upon earth. They are to rejoice, because God has now executed the judgment upon the city, which He has spoken on their account.

Once again the destruction of Rome is placed in a similitude before the eyes of the prophet. Like a great
21 millstone, which only a strong angel is able to lift up and throw into the sea, thus the mighty Babylon will receive a sudden blow and then be destroyed totally and for all times. We see here with perfect clearness that in Biblical prophecy never as in the case with heathen prediction, are the facts of the future made known to the prophet in all their details, and that even the visions which he sees and the voices which he hears give to him the counsels of God concerning the future only in the form which they would have if they were realized under the condition of his own times. It is true that the Gentile Rome has entirely disappeared from the earth; but a complete destruction of the city, such as the prophet expected under the condition of his days, as described in chap. xvii., never took place. And yet the emphasis is laid on this very thing, when in the following a description is given, to the effect,

REVELATION

[XVIII, 22-24]

found no more at all. (22) And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, ¹ of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in thee ; and the voice of a mill shall be heard no more at all in thee ; (23) and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee ; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee : for thy merchants were the princes of the earth ; for with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived. (24) And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *of whatsoever craft*.

that no joyful noise shall any longer be heard in the city, and that nothing with which the arts embellish 22 life, shall have a place there and that even the noise of daily labor shall be silent. No lamp is any more lighted, and the rejoicing of the bridegroom and the 23 bride, in which the Hebrews find the expression of the greatest happiness of life, is no longer to be heard. Here evidently is the place for the verse found in xviii. 14. For even whatever in nature delights the soul is departed from the city. Whatever of luxury and shining ornament is contained in nature is lost for the city and will never again be found in it. And yet it had been so rich in these things, that its merchants, through their traffic in these things, have become rich as princes, and by the attraction of their treasures had misled all the Gentiles to a life of sin, which these riches enabled them to live. And here mention 24 is again made of its chief sin, namely that in the terrible times of Nero, which the prophet so well remembered, the blood of the prophets and of the saints had been shed. But if wickedness has in this attained its highest development, then, too, according to Matt. xxiii. 35, all the innocent blood, which has been shed upon the earth, will be avenged on this city.

XIX After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying.

Hallelujah ; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God ; (2) for true and righteous are his judgments ; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his ¹ servants at her hand.

(8) And a second time they ² say, Hallelujah. And her smoke

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

² Gr. *have said*.

This vision, too, as was the case with all the preceding, leads the prophet to the consummation. But this is not
1 yet pictured to him in detail. He hears only the Hallelujah in the heavens which glorifies God for what He has brought about. For the deliverance of the believers is completed only when all the enemies of God are destroyed in the final judgment, and they have thereby been delivered from all danger of being misled. He alone is the cause of this deliverance, and only now the glory and power belong fully to Him, which had hitherto been seemingly curtailed and darkened by the
2 glory and the power of His enemies. The ascription of glory to God is based on the fact, that His judgments are such as judgments should be, namely, truly just, and because the judgments seen in this vision have shown themselves to be such, especially that passed upon the great harlot, which is the acme of these just judgments. For in this the destruction which she has brought down upon the inhabitants of the earth by the deceptions of her sins, and the blood of the servants of God also, which she has shed, have all received their just punishment. For this very reason it is clear, that all these judgments are regarded only as the prelude and the introduction to the final judgment, which naturally will also be one of the same kind. But a second Hallelujah expressly states, that
3 the last of these judgments was already irrevocable,

REVELATION

[XIX, 4-7]

goeth up ¹for ever and ever. (4) And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah.

(5) And a voice came forth from the throne, saying,

Give praise to our God, all ye his ²servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great.

(6) And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying,

Hallelujah : for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. (7) Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him : for the marriage of the Lamb

¹ Gr. unto the ages of the ages. ² Gr. bondservants.

in which feature the essential characteristic of the final judgment is to be found. This double Hallelujah is now taken up by the creatures who, according to chap. iv. stand immediately round the throne of God, and it is 4 sealed by their Amen; while the voice of Christ from 5 the throne itself exhorts all the servants of God, i. e. all His servants in the narrow sense, in heaven and upon earth, and all those who upon earth fear God, be they great or small, to glorify God. As if, in reply, the choir of the heavenly servants of God, to whom alone so far the goal of the ways of God had been made 6 known, begins its Hallelujah, and their voice resounds like the roar of the sea and of thunder. They base their Hallelujah on the fact that now, because with the downfall of the metropolis of the world, the victory over all the enemies of God, presupposed by the final judgment, has been secured, the omnipotent God would enter in its fullest extent upon His royal sovereignty, which had all along been limited by the power of the world that was hostile to Him. But with the perfected kingdom of God the final consummation of the congregation has also come. For this reason the choir 7 bases its mutual exhortation to joy and jubilee, which finds its expression in praising God, on the fact, that

XIX, 8-10] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

is come, And his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright *and* pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

(9) And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God. (10) And I fell down before his feet to 'worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: 'worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

¹ See marginal note on ch. 3. 9.

now the full union has been established between the Messiah and His congregation; and this, as was the case in Matt. xxii. 2, is pictured as a marriage. For with the final judgment it has also been decided who of the disciples of Jesus is properly prepared for this final consummation. Now, all those who are thus prepared will receive the beautiful wedding garment, of which it is expressly stated here, that it consisted in
8 the divine recognition of their righteousness, as this has been determined by the decisions of God in the final judgment. But the prophet is directed to write
9 down the blessedness of those who thereby have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb, in which naturally only the members of the perfected congregation participate. He is also given the assurance, that these are truly the words of God, which he is to write down, because they contain the trustworthy revelation of God. But as on all other occasions in these visions, the command to write proceeds from Christ, and He alone speaks the word of God (cf. John iii. 34), and as in
10 the former, the revelations of the future are made certain by His testimony, the prophet desires to worship Christ in the speaker. But the speaker declares, that he is an angel, who himself is only a fellow-servant of

REVELATION

[XIX, 11-12]

(11) And I saw the heaven opened ; and behold a white horse, and he that sat thereon,¹ called Faithful and True ; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. (12) And

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *called*.

the Apostle and of his brethren, who have received for this final goal of all the redemptive counsels of God the testimony of Jesus in the parable of the great marriage feast. They accordingly know, that the blessedness of those who attain to the consummation is based on an actual revelation of God. Then, too, when John in prophetic spirit hears an angel speaking, who transmits to him a command or a statement of Christ, it is always Jesus, who in this way gives him the testimony as to what he is to know or to speak concerning the secrets of the future. The angel thereby does not become anything higher than a servant of God and of Christ, and is not allowed to accept the adoration which belongs to God alone.

The sixth vision, which brings before the prophet the 11 return of Christ, begins by showing the heaven opened before his eyes so that the heavenly forms may come forth out of it. And again the first to appear is the rider upon a white horse, whom we already know from vi. 2, to be Christ returning as a conqueror. His name at once characterizes Him as such ; since it describes His chief virtues to be faithfulness and truthfulness. For He has promised to return ; and the prophet now sees Him return to fulfil His promise and thus proves that His word is the truth. And He comes for judgment, which will be just. But it is at once indicated, that His judgment is to be shown to the Seer according to the Old Testament type of a great decisive battle, in which He will conquer the enemies of God, as so often God conquered in the case of the enemies of the people of Israel. For this purpose He is equipped with divine 12

XIX, 13-15] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

his eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon his head *are* many diadems ; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. (13) And he is arrayed in a garment ¹sprinkled with blood : and his name is called The Word of God. (14) And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white *and* pure. (15) And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron :

¹ Some ancient authorities read *dipped in*.

- omniscience and omnipotence. Now His eyes are not only like flaming fire, but they are actually such and consuming everything that is antagonistic to God. And the many diadems on His head show that He is the godlike ruler of the world, who always carries out His will. But how He is to reveal Himself as such is not yet known to anybody ; and for this reason nobody but Himself knows the name which He bears in His brow and which designates Him as the Christ returning in His glory. His garment is dipped in blood. For He has often executed in His name such judgments in these wars of Jehovah which brought bloody defeats upon
- 13 His enemies. For this reason He is called the word of God ; for it has always been He who has revealed the counsels of God by accomplishing them. But now He comes, as He has promised (Matt. xxv. 31), surrounded by the angels, who like Himself, appear on white horses and in white garments. These latter will be given to
- 14 the believers when in the end they shall be declared just (xix. 8), while the angels possess them from the beginning. As the manner in which this final judgment is to come upon Israel was described in chap. xi., the prophet speaks here only of the judgment over the Gentiles.
- 15 This He at once consummates through the word of His mouth, and in it the prophecy of Ps. ii. 9 is fulfilled, as also that which is given in xiv. 19-20, describing the wrath of God as executed through the image of the

REVELATION

[XIX, 16-20]

and he treadeth the ¹ winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. (16) And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

(17) And I saw ² an angel standing in the sun : and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come, and be gathered together unto the great supper of God ; (18) that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of ³ captains, and the flesh of the mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

(19) And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. (20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought

¹ Gr. *winepress of the wine of the fierceness.*

² Gr. *one.*

³ Or, *military tribunes.* Gr. *chiliarchs.*

making of wine. If now the name, which designate 16
Him as the God-equal conqueror of the world, is written
on the garment He wears, and is found on His thigh,
where the Seer can see it as He gallops by, the purpose
is thereby to show, that He now is becoming manifest
as such. For the outcome of the battle, in the descrip- 17
tion of which the judgment He now holds is pictured, 18
is so certain, that an angel, who stands in the sun, showing
by the fact that he was clothed in its brilliancy
that he is the messenger of God, calls together all the
birds that fly in the zenith of the heavens to partake of
the feast of dead bodies which God is preparing for them.
But the judgment together with the return of Christ
which inaugurates it, is brought about by the fact, that
wickedness has attained its highest development on 19
earth, since the Roman Empire, which in the last Em-
peror has again fully revealed its hostility to Christ, has
persuaded the kings of the earth to join it in under-
taking the last fierce struggle against Christ in the final
great persecution of the Christians. And at this point
it appears that he is not at all speaking of a real battle. 20

the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that ¹ worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: (21) and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

XX And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain ² in his hand.

(2) And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is

¹ See marginal note on ch. 3. 2.

² Gr. upon.

For the beast, and its helper, the pseudo-prophet, who through his lying miracles has misled mankind to worship and reverence the beast, is simply taken and thrown into hell, where the wrath of God devours it, as it did the cities of the Siddim valley which still burn in fire
 21 and brimstone underneath the Dead Sea. All the worshippers and adherents of the Roman Empire are overtaken by destruction in this judgment of God, which the returning Christ carries out in their case with the mere word of His mouth.

If in the days of the Apostle the signs of the times pointed to the fact, that in the Roman Empire and its adherents the wickedness of mankind was to attain its highest culmination, then as soon as this had taken place, Christ would necessarily come for judgment, and the first act thereof would be the punishment and destruction of these enemies of God. With this of course had not yet been decided the fate of these individuals and of the nation who had not directly been followers of the beast and had not taken part in the persecution of the Christians. But rather, the time now began when the Devil, having been deprived of his chief agents upon earth, was prevented from continuing his work of
 1 deception upon earth. This is brought before the seer
 2 in the form of a symbolical action. An angel takes

the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, (3) and cast him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished : after this he must be loosed for a little time.

(4) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God and such as ¹ worshipped not the beast, neither his

¹ See marginal note on ch. 3. 2.

him captive and binds and locks him in the abyss of 3 hell for a period of a thousand years. In this way the prophet secures his peculiar picture of hope concerning the millennium. For during this time when Satan is bound, which period indeed bears the number of perfection, but nevertheless, because yet a part of the development of mankind, is limited by the counsel of God, the kingdom of God, which Christ intended to establish, can yet be realized upon earth. As a matter of fact, wickedness did not yet attain its highest possible culmination in the Roman Empire, and the Apostle yet lived to see that still greater dangers than persecutions threatened the congregation and that the hostility to the Christians assumed altogether different forms. But this picture of hope by the Apostle furnishes us the certainty, that if God ever gives the grace that the worst enemies of Christianity are overcome and thereby, as it were, the Satanic powers, have been bound, that then the realization of the sovereignty of God upon earth may yet be effected. In order to decide who is to participate in this blessed kingdom of God, Christ comes down from heaven. For He has continually impressed it upon His disciples, that at His return He would decide, who had been His true disciple. Accordingly, at 4 this place judgment seats are set up, and those, to whom it has been given to pass judgment, take their places

image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (5) The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no ¹power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him ²a thousand years.

¹ Or, *authority*.

² Some ancient authorities read *the*.

thereon. For as Christ on one occasion gave His disciples authority to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, because the fate of the people was to be decided in accordance with their relation to the preaching of the Apostles (Matt. xix. 28), thus there will at all times be those who have given testimony for the truth in word and deed and who thereby furnish the rule for admittance to this kingdom. In the times of the Apostles it was those who had sealed their faithfulness to the testimony they had received of Christ concerning the truth, as also to the word of God which they had obeyed, by the death of martyrdom; as also those, too, who had not been compelled to endure such extreme sufferings, but who had yet in no way yielded to Satan or his servants. The Seer wishes especially to emphasize, that not only those who would live to see the return of the Lord, but also those who had already died would take part in the blessedness of this millennium. He expressly
5 calls this the first resurrection, because it is a resurrection to an earthly life, in which the others, who have not been proved to be faithful Christians, are to partake as little as do the pious of the Old Covenant, who have fallen asleep in the hope of a better resurrection (cf. Heb. xi. 35). But those who are to take part in this
6 kingdom are definitely selected, as there is to be no further enticement by the Devil. They will then no longer be subject to the second death, i. e. the eternal

(7) And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, (8) and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the

death, whereas those who have died in their sins will first be judged according to the flesh; and in the region of the dead, where the gospel has been preached to them, they yet wait for the final decision of their fate (cf. 1 Pet. iii. 19; iv. 6). But the former the Apostle now already pronounces blessed, because they have attained to full membership with God, and as the priests of God and of Christ they now will rule for a thousand years with Him, who has been called to be the heavenly Ruler of the kingdom of God. With this it is indicated that they are not destined to enjoy blessedness for themselves in this earthly kingdom of God, but are to labor, that the glory of Christ be spread over all the peoples, and that by their conversion they become a sacrifice acceptable to God (cf. Rom. xv. 16). In this millennium the old hope of Israel is thus fulfilled, namely, that through the realization of redemption comes an earthly kingdom of God, to which those are to be attracted who stand afar off and who are to be made members of the same; which is made possible by the fact, that the Devil is bound for the time being. With this picture of hope, which John sketches only in a few outlines in prophetic speech, because nobody can *know* if and under what circumstances it can be realized, the prophet has held up before the Christians of all times a goal for which it is ever their mission to pray and to work.

In prophetic speech John now predicts that after the time appointed by God, Satan is to be released from his imprisonment, in order to lead the heathens in their last

XX, 9-12] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

number of whom is as the sand of the sea. (9) And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down ¹out of heaven, and devoured them. (10) And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night ²for ever and ever.

(11) And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (12) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne;

¹ Some ancient authorities insert *from God*.

² *Gr. unto the ages of the ages.*

- attack; and this is at once to bring about the judgment of the world. For certain nations are found at the extreme ends of the earth, who have not yet been reached by the mission activity of the congregation of the millennial period. John, in accordance with an old prophetic appellation, calls them Gog and Magog (cf. Ez. 9 xxxviii. 39), and further pictures, in accordance with this prophecy, how these people will go out to battle against the Christians, and they are here described as an army besieging the city of Jerusalem. But a battle does not take place, for no harm can befall the adherents
- 10 of the kingdom of the millennium. Fire falls from heaven, as is the case in Ez. xxxix. 6, and destroys them. Their leader is cast into a lake of fire, where the two beasts are already to be found, to be condemned to eter-
- 11 nal torment. With this the hour of the final judgment has struck. The prophet sees the white throne, which has been set up for this purpose. He who sits enthroned there needs not to be named. For He, the Creator of heaven and of earth, it is before whose countenance they disappear when their hour as come. The coming of the destruction of the world will devour the millennium also together with its members. The judg-
- 12 ment of the world begins. The books in which the

REVELATION

[XX, 13-15]

and books were opened : and another book was opened, which is *the book of life* : and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. (13) And the sea gave up the dead that were in it ; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. (14) And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, *even the lake of fire*. (15) And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

conduct of all mankind has been recorded are opened, in order to judge men according to their deeds. The same is true of the book of life, in which the names of those are recorded who are destined for eternal life. For this reason all those who have been drowned in the sea, 13 together with all the others who are in the region of the dead, must be brought before the throne of God. This is not a resurrection, as the first was, to an earthly life ; for then there will no longer be any earth. Nor will it be a resurrection like that which the believers expect after the example of Christ, but it is a resurrection to the judgment, concerning which Jesus had spoken in 14 John. v. 29. The last enemy who must be overcome is death, as Paul teaches in 1 Cor. xv. 26. For henceforth there shall be no bodily death, but only the second death, 15 in which men are eternally overcome by the fire of divine wrath. But of this all will become the victims, whose names are not written in the book of life, be it that they never were found there, or that they have been erased, because the bearers of these names did not prove faithful. But what is to become of those who are affected by this judgment, is shown to the Seer in the last vision.

The seventh vision also has a special introduction. It gives first of all a kind of a title, in which is stated

XXI And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away ; and the sea is no more. (2) And I saw ¹ the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall ² dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, And God himself shall be with them, ³ and be their God : (4) and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes ; and death shall be no more ; neither shall there be

¹ Or, *the holy city Jerusalem coming down new out of heaven.*

² Gr. *tabernacle.*

³ Some ancient authorities omit, and be their God.

- 1 what the vision contains. It is the new world, which
 2 comes forth after the destruction of the old world, and with it the new Jerusalem, which like the old, is a holy city In this case, however, it descends from heaven, where according to the counsel of God, it had stood from eternity before His eyes in order to be realized now. It is the perfected congregation. And as the latter in its blessed consummation has attained to the full communion with its Lord and Saviour, it is here compared with a bride, who has decked herself for her husband, and in this way is perfectly prepared for the marriage. The voice of Christ, which is heard from the throne of
 3 God, points out to the Seer, in how far this congregation can constitute the center of the new world, as Jerusalem was once the center of Israel. For in this congregation the old promises of God are realized, according to which God Himself, in the full sense of the word, will dwell in the midst of His people, just as He typically had His dwelling-place in Jerusalem. Those made perfect will really be His people and He will be their God, who leads them into a perfect union with Himself. In this way in the new world the contrast between heaven and earth has been done away with. In that place of blessedness all the sufferings and needs of earth are at
 4 an end, because all such things have been destroyed with

REVELATION

[XXI, 5-9]

mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. (5) And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, ¹ Write: for these words are faithful and true. (6) And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (7) He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (8) But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *shall be* in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

(9) And there came one of the seven angels who had the

¹ Or, *Write, These words are faithful and true.*

the old world. God Himself tells the Seer, that He will 5 make all things new; and Christ, who directs him to write these words down, testifies to their reliability and truthfulness. But this is not only *about* to take place, but in the vision God already points out to the prophet 6 the time when it *has already* taken place. He can do this, for He is the Alpha and the Omega, i. e. the beginning and the end. As He has established the former He will also bring about the latter. For the redemption which is realized at this consummation of all things comes from Him alone. The fountain of the water of eternal life, with which He satisfies every demand, is a gift of His free grace. For those who overcome it is appointed as an inheritance and He will prove Himself to 7 be their God, who gives everything that man needs by embracing them in His fatherly love as His children. For as a matter of course this promise is intended only for those who overcome all temptation to fall away. The cowards, who through fear of persecution deny the Lord, can receive only that which is given to all unbelievers, who through their sins have become an abomination to the Lord, and this is eternal destruction. With this 9

XXI, 10-18] *WEISS'S COMMENTARY*

seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. (10) And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, (11) having the glory of God: her ¹light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal: (12) having a wall great and high; having twelve ²gates and at the ²gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: (13) on the east were three ²gates; and on the north three ²gates; and on the south three ²gates; and on the west

¹ Gr. *luminary*.

² Gr. *portals*.

- earnest warning the introduction closes; and now the real vision begins. For it is again one of the angels with the bowls, who, as such in xviii. offered to show to the Seer the judgment over the great harlot, who now,
- 10 too, offers to show him the bride who is to be given in marriage to the Lamb. For this reason the angel removes him in the spirit up on a high mountain, from which he is able to see the realization in the new Jerusalem of the consummation of redemption, which had been determined in the counsel of God.
- 11 The underlying idea in the whole narrative shown to the Seer of the heavenly city of God, i. e. the place of the final consummation, is the participation of the blessed in the divine glory. Since this latter is represented as a supernatural glory of light, the heavenly light which fills the city and which takes the place of the luminaries of the old world (cf. Gen. i. 17), is like the most precious jewel, with which in iv. 8 the glory was compared, that shines forth from the face of God
- 12 Himself. The city has a wall with twelve gates, at each
- 13 of which an angel is keeping guard, and which bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, because the perfected congregation is the antitype of the Old Testament congregation, the center of which was Jerusalem.

REVELATION

[XXI, 14-19]

three ¹ gates. (14) And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (15) And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the ¹ gates thereof, and the wall thereof. (16) And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. (17) And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, *according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.* (18) And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. (19) The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious

¹ Gr. *portals.*

But the fact that in each case three open toward the four points of the compass, shows that now, according to the promise of Jesus in Luke xiii. 29, those made perfect are to come from all directions into the heavenly city. Upon the foundation stones of the walls the 14 names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb are inscribed, because these have founded the congregation. The angel himself measures the city and its wall for the Seer. The city, like the Holy of Holies in the temple, 15 in which God dwelled in a typical manner, is built like 16 a square, each side according to length, breadth and height being 12,000 stades, because in this case the number twelve, which characterizes the city, is multiplied by the number of perfection. The measurement 17 of the walls also results in the symbolical number of 144 ells, in which twelve has been multiplied by itself. The fact that all this is given according to human measurements, John explains by the fact, that an angel too, if he would measure something for the Seer, must make use of human measurements. In the same way the divine glory, in which the blessed participate, can in all cases be shown to the Seer only by whatever is brilliant or beautiful upon the earth. For this reason the 18

XXI, 20-24] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, ¹sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; (20) the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, ²jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. (21) and the twelve ³gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several ⁴gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, ⁵as it were transparent glass. (22) And I saw no ⁶temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the ⁷temple thereof. (23) And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, ⁸and the lamp thereof *is* the Lamb. (24) And the nations shall walk ⁹amidst the light thereof:

¹ Or, *lapis lazuli*. ² Or, *sapphire*. ³ Gr. *portals*. ⁴ Or, *transparent as glass*. ⁵ Or, *sanctuary*. ⁶ Or, *and the Lamb, the lamp thereof*. ⁷ Or, *by*.

- ²¹ structure of the wall consists of jasper; and the city, which is seen above the wall, and even the paving of the streets, consists of pure, transparent gold. Indeed, each of the foundation stones is a pure jewel, and each of the gates consists of a pearl. But the most unique
- ²² feature (over against the earthly Jerusalem), is the fact that the city has no temple, because God is immediately making His dwelling-place in it, together with Lamb, through which in the future, too, the gracious presence of God is given to those made perfect. Only now is the word entirely fulfilled, that the worshippers of God are not to pray to Him at a special place appointed for this purpose (cf. John iv. 21). The description closes, as it began, with the statement, that the city has no longer
- ²³ any need of the created heavenly lights, because the brilliancy of the divine glory itself gives it light. This, naturally, those made perfect can see only after they have learned to see the glory of the Lamb (cf. John i. 14).
- ²⁴ The heavenly Jerusalem is the dwelling-place of the blessed. But who are the blessed? That they are the believers out of Israel requires no proof. But the great

and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. (25) And the ¹gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): (26) and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: (27) and there shall in no wise enter into it anything ²unclean, or he that ³maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in **XXII** the Lamb's book of life. (1) And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding

¹ Gr. *portata*. ² Gr. *common*. ³ Or, *doeth*.

thing is, that now the heathen also will walk in the light of this city of God (Is. lx. 3). Changing to prophetic discourse, John describes, that then too the old prophetic word will be fulfilled, according to which the kings of the world will bring their glory to this place (Ps. lxxii. 10). It is indeed no longer the earthly Jerusalem, to which the prophets of Israel saw the heathens go with precious gifts, which they had to bring, but it is the heavenly city of God. But this for the Seer is the deepest meaning of the prophecy, that everything which in the old world was glorious and precious, is also to be found in the new world in glorified form. By this fact, too, all those pictures of xxi. 18-21 attain to a higher realization. Through the gates, which are now never 25 again closed, new multitudes continually crowd in, to 27 bring their treasures into the city of God. For nothing that is profane and out of harmony with the sacred character of the city can enter, nor can those who are polluted with the abomination and lies of idolatry, but only those who are destined for eternal life in Christ. And how do they attain this? The angel shows to the Seer the crystal stream, in which the water of life flows. This is the river of Paradise (Gen. ii. 10). It comes 1 forth from the throne of the Eternal Living One and of Him to whom He has given the power to have life in Himself (John v. 26). Here is the fountain of all life. And the river flows through the streets of the city of

XXII, 2-5] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

out of the throne of God and of ¹the Lamb, (3) in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was ²the tree of life, bearing twelve ³manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (3) And there shall be ⁴no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his ⁵servants shall serve him; (4) and they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* on their foreheads. (5) And there shall be night no more; and they need

¹ Or, the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, &c. ² Or, a tree. ³ Or, crops of fruit.
⁴ Or, no more anything accursed. ⁵ Gr. bondservants.

God, and on its two banks stand the trees of life, such
2 as the tree of life in Paradise (Gen. ii. 9), from the fruits of which mankind was once forbidden to eat, but from which the redeemed may now eat, since each tree has new fruit every month. Even the leaves of these trees are medicinal and life-giving. For as believing Israel finds there in eternal life only that which had been promised them from eternity, the Gentiles now recover from the sickness of death, of which they had been the hopeless victims. They can now drink of the water of
3 life and eat of the fruit of the trees of life. For nothing
4 upon which a curse of God rests and which accordingly men are not permitted to use, can be found there. But wherein does the blessedness of this eternal life consist? In this, that the blessed serve God, who is enthroned among them, and also Him who sits at His right hand, as His servants, so that they constantly see His face in the direct communion with Him, and that they are permitted to carry the name of God on their foreheads, and are accordingly recognized by Him as
5 His property. The Seer once again returns to the statement, that in this place of perfection eternal day will prevail, and that the blessed will have need of no light, neither earthly nor heavenly, because God Himself sheds the glory of His light over them, and in this light

no light of lamp, neither light of sun ; for the Lord God shall give them light : and they shall reign ¹ for ever and ever.

(6) And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true : and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show unto his ²servants the things which must shortly come to pass. (7) And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.

(8) And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to ³worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. (9) And he saith unto me, See thou do it not : I am a fellow-servant

¹ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*
² See marginal note on ch. 3. 2.

³ Gr. *bondservants.*

they will rule royally over the new world, the blessings of which all belong to them unto all eternity. In conclusion, the angel who has shown him all these things, 6 gives him the assurance, that this is a trustworthy and faithful revelation of God. For he emphasizes the fact, that God, who rules over all the different kinds of spirits, through which He enlightens the prophets, has sent him to show His servants what is soon to take place. With this he intends to point out, that this final goal which he has shown to the Seer in the last vision is the fulfilment of everything that the prophets, as the servants of God, have ever announced. He refers to the fact, that Christ Himself had promised that He would 7 return soon (cf. already, iii. 11) ; and he declares those blessed, who cling to the prophetic words of this book, as these words are to bring not only revelations concerning the future but also earnest admonitions based thereon. And here John himself steps forward as the eye and the ear witness of what has been shown him in the visions of this book. Here, too, the prophet is disposed 8 because the angel, when standing before him in the vision, still has upon his lips a word of Christ, to fall down before him and worship him, because he thinks the heavenly being to be Christ Himself. But exactly 9

XXII, 10-13] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book : ¹ worship God.

(10) And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book ; for the time is at hand. (11) He that is unrighteous let him do unrighteousness ²still : and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy ²still : and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness ⁴still : and he that is holy, let him be made holy ²still. (12) Behold, I come quickly ; and my ²reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. (13) I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the

¹ See marginal note on ch. 3. 9.

² Or, yet more.

³ Or, wages.

as this is done in xix. 10, the angel stops him, declaring himself to be one of the fellow-servants of the brethren of the Seer, of the prophets, and of all who heed the admonitions of this book. The vision closes, as does the fifth, with the admonition to worship God alone.

Now follows the command of Christ to publish the book, and this John has already complied with by putting it in the shape of a letter (i. 4 sqq). Only Christ who has directed him to write (i. 11-19) can tell him what he is to do with what he has written. Although

- 10 Christ had ordered him for the present to seal, i. e. to keep secret certain things (x. 4.), He now directs him not to seal the words of this prophetic book, i. e. to publish it. This He bases on the fact that the time for the fulfilment of this prophecy is close at hand.
- 11 For this reason then he who commits unrighteousness may continue to do so, and he who defiles himself with sin may continue to do so. For he has only a short time left for this. But in the same way the just man is to continue practising his justice and the holy man, who separates himself entirely from all sinful things, to continue his practise of holiness. He needs
- 12 to continue this only for a short time more. For now
- 18 Christ Himself, in conclusion, expressly states, that He will come soon, for the purpose of distributing the

last, the beginning and the end. (14) Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have ¹ the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the ² gates into the city. (15) Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and ³ maketh a lie.

(16) I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things ⁴ for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star.

¹ Or, the authority over. Comp. ch. 6. 8. ² Gr. portals.
³ Or, doeth. Comp. ch. 21. 27. ⁴ Gr. over.

reward which He brings with Him. Then each one will be recompensed according to his conduct. He who was from eternity as God Himself will also bring about the end, when their recompense shall be made. He declares those blessed who have washed their garments, 14 i. e. who have been irreproachable in their entire conduct, because they can now receive the authority to eat from the tree of life and through the gates to enter into the city in which this tree grows. For all those 15 are for all times excluded from this city, who, like unclean animals are not permitted to come near to the holy city. Special mention is, however, made of all the heathen sinners, and the list culminates in those who love and practise lies, because lying, according to John viii. 44 constitutes an essential element in the real nature of Satan. In conclusion, Jesus shows Himself as the one who has sent His messenger, John, to testify 16 to the congregations, to whom he addresses everything that has been written in this book, which is to be read in the congregational meetings of those to whom, according to His directions, it is to be sent. It seems that He wants to designate Himself as the One, from whom David himself sprang, and in whom the generation of David culminates, but unmistakably He calls Himself the bright morning star, which introduces the day of the blessed consummation. In response to the

XXII, 17-19] WEISS'S COMMENTARY

(17) ¹ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.

(18) I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add ² unto them, God shall add ² unto him the plagues which are written in this book: (19) and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, ³ which are written in this book.

¹ Or, both.

² Gr. upon.

³ Or, even from the things which are written.

17 announcement of His speedy return, the prophetic Spirit, who inspires the prophet, answers, as also does the congregation, which as a bride is waiting for the coming of the bridegroom. In this petition every one in the congregation is to join. The matter of importance is, that everybody who is longing for redemption shall come, and he will receive the water of life, for which he is desirous, as a matter of free grace.

In the epistolary conclusion the Apostle himself addresses those to whom his book is to be read in the
18 congregational meetings. He testifies to them, that God will repay like with like to those who in any way shall damage this book, and will afflict those, who add anything, with the plagues in the third and the fifth vision, of which the real believers as such are freed. On the
19 other hand, those who take anything away from the book, will lose also their share in the blessedness of the final consummation, that has been described above. This no doubt refers also to the fanatical fancies with which it was possible to pervert, by additions or subtractions, the hopes of the Christians. But we must remember fact, that the essence of prophecy does not consist the only in the revelation of the future, but essentially, too, in admonitions based on such revelation. But in the days of the Apostle there were those who wanted

REVELATION

[XXII, 20-21]

(20) He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus.

(21) The grace of the Lord Jesus ¹be ²with the saints. Amen.

¹ Some ancient authorities add *Christ*.

² Two ancient authorities read *with all*.

to add certain obligations on the Mosaic law (cf. ii. 24.) to that which it demanded. In the same way we see from the letter in chap. ii. and iii. that there were those, who, appealing to their Christian liberty, declared that many things were allowed which no doubt were sinful, or were at any rate regarded as sinful by the Apostle, such as fornication and the eating of sacrificial meat. To both classes who were changing the boundary lines of Christian morality the strong threat of the prophet is directed. But he does not want to close with a threat. Accordingly, he again recalls, that He who has given testimony concerning all the promises of this book, has promised that He would 20 return soon. The Apostle seals this promise with his Amen and with the prayer for His coming. In conclusion, he wishes his readers the companionship of the grace of the Lord Jesus, as Paul is accustomed to do in 21 his letters.









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